the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 15, 1999

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HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH CHINA
ROBERT KAGAN

THE PRESIDENT AND THE POLLS

NOEMIE EMERY • FRED BARNES

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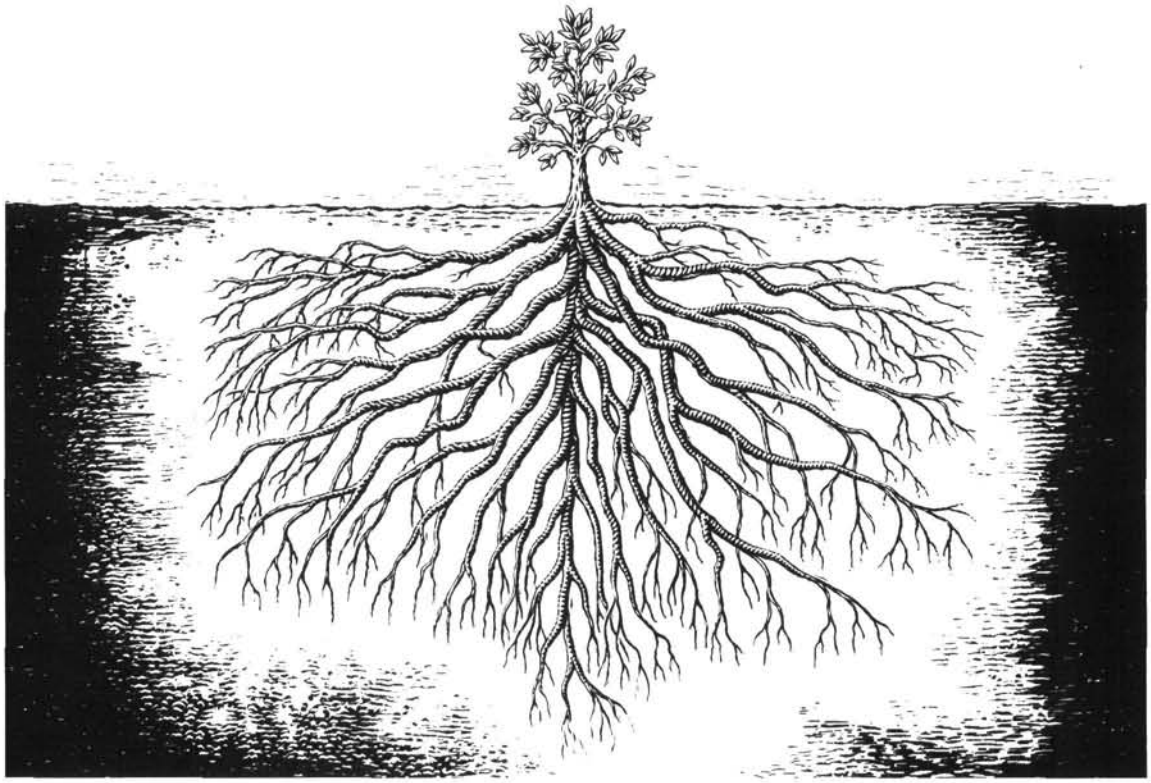

A PROGRESS REPORT.

February 8th marks the third anniversary of the day the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was signed into law. From the outset, the intent of the Act was to make new technologies available to more people. Encourage innovation. And create new jobs. All from greater competition. What's happened since has generated considerable debate.

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the weekly
Standard

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 21 • FEBRUARY 15, 1999

2 SCRAPBOOK

6 CASUAL
Miami Matt Rees, Super Bowl fan.

7 EDITORIAL
Guilty as Charged

9 THE GOP AND THE POLLS
Impeachment has zip to do with 2000. *by* **Fred Barnes**

10 WHAT DEFENSE INCREASE?
Clinton shortchanges the military again. *by* **Gary Schmitt**

13 THE RACE TO REPLACE NEWT
An empty suit leads in Georgia. *by* **Tucker Carlson**

15 SUPPLY-SIDE SCHISMS
Republicans feud over the CBO. *by* **Matthew Rees**

16 BILINGUAL BULLYING
Washington's agents prowl the schools. *by* **Jim Littlejohn & Roger Clegg**

18 THE CHARACTER TEST
New Dems would define citizenship down. *by* **Eric Felten**

40 PARODY
The president reshuffles his cabinet.

Cover by Thomas Fluharty

19 THE PRESIDENT AND THE POLLS
Clinton's numbers are as soft as they are high. *by* **Noemie Emery**

22 DOESN'T SMELL LIKE TEEN SPIRIT
Younger and nicer, the Echo Boom is, like, so un-Gen X. *by* **Jonathan V. Last**

26 APOLOGIES TO OUR ENEMIES
The Clinton Justice Department hands out racial spoils. *by* **Max Schulz**

Books & Arts

29 HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH CHINA James Mann's history of Sino-American relations. *by* **Robert Kagan**

31 THE PROFIT OF HEMLOCK How suicide guru Derek Humphry will save you money. *by* **Wesley J. Smith**

33 BIG FISH EAT LITTLE FISH Blaire French's novel of the perilous academic seas. *by* **Elizabeth Edwards Spalding**

34 RUSSIAN ROULETTE Rose Brady misses the reason Moscow's financial reformers failed. *by* **Thomas Graham**

36 OUT WITH THE IN-CROWD Edmund Wilson's take on the Algonquin Round Table. *by* **Alan Pell Crawford**

38 COMMUNIST CHIC Hoisting a few to the ghost of Stalin. *by* **John Wilson**

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The New Gender Gap

Alarmed about something it labels "religiopolitics," the feminist Center for Gender Equality commissioned a survey of 1,000 women to uncover the presumably sinister "impact of conservative religious political activism on women's attitudes about their equality and their role in society."

The upshot: Women love religion! Three quarters of them call it "very important" in their lives. It gives them friendship, support, and ethical standards, and they welcome its influence on the public stage.

As the center puts it, "Overall, women think that religious organizations have a positive impact on American life and would like them to be more involved in the public debate. . . . They believe that religious organizations are not a threat to their own interests or to the interests of women in general."

On that last point, the survey amounts to an especially galling rebuff: "Does your involvement with your religious organization make you feel that to be a good wife you must allow your husband to make decisions for the family?" No: 66 percent. "Does it make you feel uncomfortable about your political beliefs?" No: 88 percent. "About your sexuality?" No: 88 percent. "Does it make you feel you should be critical or speak against people who don't follow your church's teachings?" No: 89 percent. More than twice as many women think the Christian Coalition serves women's interests as think it is a threat.

Amid all this serenity, though, one trend confirms the feminists' worst fears: women's growing conservatism on abortion. A full 70 percent of American women now favor more restrictions on abortion, and 40 percent would ban it altogether or allow it only after rape or incest or to save the mother's life.

"Complex and disturbing," is how the center, headed by Faye Wattleton, longtime executive director of Planned Parenthood, sums up the survey's findings. Of course, almost any faithful sounding of real people's views is bound to seem dizzyingly complex if the only fixed point of your mental universe is that a woman's dignity depends on her absolute, unhindered right to abort her pregnancies.

Prayer Time for Hitler

President Clinton talked about world peace at the 47th annual National Prayer Breakfast last week—as well he ought, having brought along for the occasion Yasser Arafat. The Palestinian leader's unrepented involvement with the murder of Leon Klinghoffer aboard the *Achille Lauro* in 1985 and innumerable other acts of terrorism over his long career caused several invited religious leaders and members of Congress to boycott the bacon and exhortation. They missed a Clinton performance that deserves not to slip away unremarked. Of course last year's Prayer Breakfast speech—what connoisseurs call the "Croissants I've Had to Bear" address—set a standard that may never be topped, as the president laid out the steps he planned to take to atone for his adultery: "First, I will instruct my lawyers. . . ." (That breakfast is the subject of a recently issued theologians' manifesto and set of essays, which The Scrapbook recommends highly: *Judgment Day at the White House: A Critical Declaration Exploring Moral Issues and the Political Use and Abuse of Religion*, edited by Gabriel Fackre and published by Eerdman's.)

But this year's breakfast was not without its delights. Most remarkable was when the president declared Nazism a species of Christianity: "I do believe that even though Adolf Hitler preached a perverted form of Christianity, God did not want him to prevail, but I also know that when we take up arms or words against one another, we must be very careful in invoking the name of our Lord." The claim that Hitler had anything but hatred and contempt for all forms of Christianity is a slander, probably originating in the president's ongoing project to apologize for everything except his own actions. (See Max Schulz's "Apologies to Our Enemies" on page 26 for the latest installment.) But, even leaving aside the slur against his own religion, Clinton seemed to imply that it was all right to disagree—as though, Who's to say? Maybe God was on Hitler's side and we'd sure better not say He was on ours.

Then there was the moment when the president quoted St. Paul. The passage is from Romans 8:26—"we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words"—which Clinton used as a proof text for his claim that we can never know the will of God sufficiently to use God's name in going to war. The reader who thinks it unfair to point out that the very next verse says the opposite—"And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints

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according to the will of God"—will probably also think unfair THE SCRAPBOOK's suggestion that the president look a little earlier in that chapter of Romans for some revelation: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. . . . For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot."

UNFILTERED CLINTON

Is Bill Clinton picking up PR tips from the tobacco industry he professes to despise? That might explain the addition last September of Guy Smith to the White House impeachment war room. Smith is a one-time journalist and public relations expert, kind of a Sid Blumenthal and James Carville rolled into one. But he didn't hone his skills as a Democratic hellraiser; he got his training at Philip Morris.

As an executive with the tobacco giant from 1985 to 1993, Smith was a leader in the public relations battles waged against anti-smoking advocates. Well before the president started massaging black voters and cracking open the piñata in his State of the Union address, Smith had the course plotted. Smith urged his Philip Morris colleagues to "emphasiz[e] that smoking restrictions . . . place an extra burden on minorities and poor people." He advocated a campaign "to make Philip Morris U.S.A. leaders more visible and accessible to the public." And, presaging Clinton's dependency strategy, Smith stated, "The job now is to . . . get people . . . to not only like us, but to actively *support* us because they feel that they *need* us."

Sounds an awful lot like Bill Clinton's political redemption strategy. Too bad the president didn't come with a surgeon general's warning.

VOUCHER VICTORIES

Billionaire philanthropist Ted Forstmann, who made his name on Wall Street through friendly corporate takeovers, went on *Oprah* last week to boost his privately funded school-choice charity, which may be blossoming into something of a friendly takeover of the nation's troubled urban schools.

With partners John Walton (of Wal-Mart) and Ron Burkel, Forstmann set up the Children's Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships to underprivileged children in Washington, D.C., to attend private school. The amounts aren't lavish—up to $1,500 or so, depending on need—but the demand has been overwhelming. Last year, as THE SCRAPBOOK reported at the time, the fund dispensed 1,000 scholarships via a lottery that attracted more than 7,500 entrants. But that was just the beginning.

Forstmann's *Oprah* appearance with a mother of three children who have received scholarships attracted a flood of calls from both potential donors and scholarship applicants. The success of the D.C. program, and the donations it has attracted, will allow the Children's Scholarship Fund to spread. Similar programs are now planned in 40 cities, benefiting as many as 40,000 students in the next school year.

Meanwhile, Arizona's supreme court upheld that state's school-choice tax credit against objections that it violated the separation of church and state because money might trickle down to parochial schools. The court held that the beneficiaries of a tax credit are taxpayers and their children, not the schools they attend. Inch by inch, the battle for school choice is being won.

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WHITHER GREATNESS?

David Brooks is an excellent writer and a smart man, but he is profoundly wrong in his paean to the middle class ("Good and Plenty," Feb. 1). Brooks considers moral leadership to be merely an "abstraction," endorses a bourgeoisie that is indifferent towards any injustice or immorality that doesn't "directly affect their own lives," and characterizes efforts to restore the moral climate of the country and to think about what sort of America we are leaving our children as "grand speculative issues." It seems to me that this outlook is shortsighted and selfish, devoid of grand aspiration and noble moral purpose.

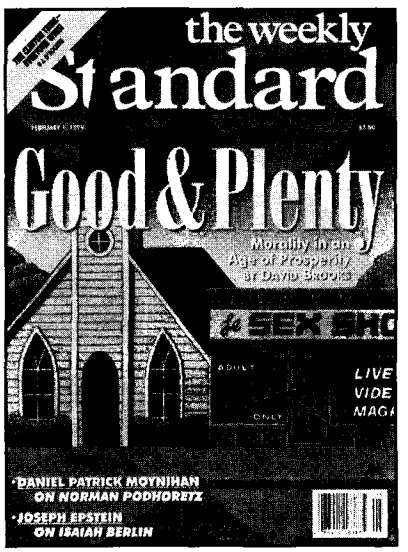
Bill Clinton is now the most popular second-term president ever and the man Americans most respect in the world. With his popularity as a backdrop, Brooks writes that "the counterculture has nothing to do with the attitudes on display in Plainfield and across the country." Nothing? Is it merely a coincidence that the kind of deep non-judgmentalism we see in Plainfield, Connecticut, is also celebrated in Hollywood and the Upper West Side, by radical feminists and left-wing church organizations, and by writers such as Frank Rich, Anthony Lewis, and Gore Vidal?

In defense of the citizens of Plainfield, Brooks writes that "many people were willing to condemn [Clinton's] perjury, but nobody wanted to moralize about the president's adulterous affair with a 21-year-old-intern." That's a clever use of the word "moralize," connoting as it does images of rigid, Puritanical right-wingers being judgmental. Brooks makes it clear that neither he nor the good citizens of Plainfield are "moralizers." I wonder, though: Can one be deeply offended by, and condemn, the president's affair, in the White House, with a 21-year-old intern, and not be considered a moralizer?

Brooks also writes that the bourgeois "has a healthy suspicion of people who radiate certitude." But what does Brooks make of Ronald Reagan, who radiated more certitude than perhaps any modern American president and won 93 states in two national elections?

Brooks argues that for the last 30 years conservatives were the defenders of bourgeois values. He then mocks conservatives by writing, "Well, my fellow right wingers, you wanted bourgeois values? You got 'em." The mistake Brooks makes is in assuming that conservatives were defenders of bourgeois values per se, when in fact many conservatives were defenders of individual responsibility, self-discipline, lawfulness, and loyalty to family and country, which for a great long while resided (more or less) in the middle class. Today this may or may not be the case. Regardless, it is not "bourgeois values" but timeless virtues that should command the allegiance of conservatives.

In his defense of bourgeois man, Brooks describes him as unwilling to



"grapple with great truths or profound moral issues." He doesn't bother himself with "glorious causes." He is "never heroic," has "no grandeur," is "dull and morally insensate," and leads "mediocre lives." He cares about "material facts" and gives "the belly priority over the soul." But Brooks assures us that there's no cause for alarm because "in his own steady, unadventurous way, he has been able to build the country—and sustain its fine communities like Plainfield."

Two years ago a writer took to the pages of THE WEEKLY STANDARD and offered a very different analysis. "Democracy has a tendency to slide into nihilistic mediocrity if its citizens are not inspired by some larger national goal," he wrote. "If they think of nothing but their narrow self-interest, of their commercial activities, they lose a sense of grand aspiration and noble purpose." He scolded American politicians because they "don't dare to make great plans or issue large challenges to themselves and their country . . . Americans are not asking big questions about their civilization . . . and so our politics has become degrading and boring." And he scolded conservatives who have "become besotted with localism, local communities, and the devolution of power to the localities. By contrast, those who preached national greatness were not believers in the superior virtue of the simple folk, as today's populists are. They believed in . . . grandeur."

That writer was David Brooks.

PETER WEHNER
WASHINGTON, DC

ALTERED STATES

Let me get this straight: I spent most of 1998 arguing that Bill Clinton has "defiled the office" and "lacks any sense of shame," but because I don't favor impeachment and removal, I'm somehow a Clinton apologist ("Altering History," Jan. 18)? Sorry I haven't toed your line slavishly enough.

Regarding Gennifer Flowers: Do you really believe any of the millions watching *60 Minutes* in 1992 thought nothing at all happened between the two of them? I do wish I had taken her charges about Clinton more seriously in 1992. With THE WEEKLY STANDARD's perfect 20/20 hindsight, Flowers's story did indeed turn out to be relevant to Clinton's presidency. But it was hard to know exactly what to believe then about their relationship or her state job.

My 1992 coverage basically reflected the fact that we knew something had happened (otherwise, why did I do three stories?), but not whether everything Flowers said was to be trusted. Her credibility was a relevant issue for me to pursue. The suggestion that I should have accepted the audio as gospel misses the crucial fact that experts hired by the networks thought the tapes might have been doctored. Remember, she was paid by a tabloid for her story.

The gist of your argument is that when a woman comes forward to tell a

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story about a politician, her account should be accepted in its entirety at face-value. Why do I suspect the editors of THE WEEKLY STANDARD took a different view when that woman's name was Anita Hill?

JONATHAN ALTER
NEW YORK, NY

TRADING UP

William R. Hawkins suggests that the two propositions of business and security must be at odds with each other ("Big Business vs. National Security?" Jan. 18). I disagree strongly with this contention and believe that reflexive endorsements of any and all sanctions, as Hawkins seems to make, have brought us to where we are today. Constancy in our foreign policy is confounded by an incoherent mix of sanctions that castigates and punishes our friends while doing little to dissuade "notorious regimes."

Perhaps a distinction should be made, for not all sanctions are created equal. I support the narrowly targeted sanctions against Russian firms guilty of proliferating missile technology that were announced earlier this month, and I do believe we should restrict technology flows to potentially hostile states. But I do not believe this worthy goal means that all American products should lose access to foreign markets.

Policy should be decided on the basis of what works—and in most instances, unilateral U.S. sanctions do not. It is illustrative to look at one subset of sanctions that conservatives and liberals alike agree need to be changed. Unilateral sanctions on nations such as Iran, Libya, Cuba, and North Korea presently block the export of American food and medical supplies. Hawkins claims that "U.S. gains [from trade] consist of private profits, while gains to the regimes are increases in state power." However, it is difficult to conceive of an advantage that would accrue to a regime from the import of American wheat or antibiotics, which are freely available for purchase from our competitors.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 212, the Freedom to Market Act, to repeal existing unilateral sanctions on food and medicine. Hawkins argues that the "political purpose transcends economics," yet he provides no indication of how sanctions can affect either the body politic of the target state or their pocketbooks.

And if he were to visit Washington state, he would realize that the transcendence of lofty purpose is punishing hard-working family farmers with the lowest wheat prices in history, in part from current export restrictions.

The spurious link between sanctions reformers and "big business" is gratuitously sanctimonious—I merely want to allow family farmers to compete more equally in global markets where our competitors already have a presence.

GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT JR.
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC

William R. Hawkins appears to believe that American business could care less about the defense of our borders, as long as it makes a profit. Hawkins is entitled to his opinion, but the fact is that we oppose unilateral sanctions because they don't work. They only hurt American workers, consumers, and businesses.

Hawkins claims that the Clinton White House is so eager for campaign contributions that it is, in effect, selling out national security by calling for restraint on imposing sanctions. Yet over half of the 120-plus sanctions imposed in the last eight decades were imposed during the last five years—hardly the record of an administration seeking quid pro quos.

Hawkins contends that "the [Lugar-Crane-Hamilton] bill would have effectively shifted sanctions policy out of Congress, where foreign policy hardliners and social conservatives have strong voices, to the White House." In reality, the opposite is true. As indicated above, this White House has demonstrated that it is hellbent on using unilateral sanctions as a foreign policy tool. The Lugar-Crane-Hamilton bill actually reasserts congressional restraint on the sanctions powers excessively used by this administration.

National security is a business issue. No issue is more fundamental to the free flow of commerce and our freedom as a people. That's why we support a strong military and strong leadership. It does not follow, however, that when we fail to exercise that statesmanship, we should apply unilateral sanctions that merely benefit America's commercial competitors and do nothing to improve the behavior of the target countries.

Multilateral sanctions—where the world community stands together to isolate a rogue regime—can be effective on a selective basis. But unilateral sanctions do not work. We won't forward our security goals by hurting private enterprise's ability to compete in the global marketplace. We need international trade to maintain our current prosperity and increase future economic growth.

THOMAS J. DONOHUE
PRESIDENT
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WASHINGTON, DC

GET SERIOUS

When I finished reading Chester E. Finn Jr.'s recent article about education reform, I found myself wondering whether or not anyone else remembers that Ronald Reagan once actually wanted to abolish the Department of Education ("Getting Serious About the Schools," Jan. 25).

My point is simply that until Republicans are seriously prepared to address the proposition that the federal government has no business involving itself in education at any level, they'll continue to play defense against the Democrats' marvelously potent and well-funded scoring machine. In this case, sensible policy could also be good politics, if only a persuasive spokesman for devolution of power and reallocation of taxing authority could be found.

GEORGE D. WALDMAN
READING, MA

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Casual

The Tale of a Stub

There was a period of my childhood when the Super Bowl meant the world to me. Immersed in my football-card collection, I knew all the players' vital statistics—height, weight, college, hobbies, interceptions, receptions, rushing yards, and everything else. It was just then that the Miami Dolphins under coach Don Shula had their triumph in Super Bowl VIII, and I became the team's most ardent Northern California fan.

That game, unfortunately, marked the end of the Dolphins' dynasty—they haven't won a league championship since—but I have crystal-clear memories of the Super Bowls that followed: Lynn Swann's four miraculous catches, totaling 161 yards, to deflate the Dallas Cowboys in 1976; the Minnesota Vikings player hit so hard the next year his head appeared to fly from his body (it was only his helmet that took flight); and the pass dropped by veteran Jackie Smith in the end zone two years later that probably lost the game for the Cowboys.

Most of the games since then, I'm afraid, are something of a blur. The Cowboys beat the Steelers three years ago? News to me. But last week's game in Miami will remain etched in my memory: The 74,803 people in the stadium included my father and me.

Sports Illustrated says every sports fan should attend at least one Super Bowl. I would amend this slightly: Every sports fan should attend at least one Super Bowl *in Miami*. Why? Because, as William Jennings Bryan presciently put it, "Miami is the only city in the world where you can tell a lie at breakfast that will come true by evening." The bacchanal that is the Super Bowl is unimaginable in, say, Minneapolis.

To see what I mean, consider past Miami Super Bowls: In 1969, a brash young quarterback named Joe Namath delivered on his promise that the Jets—19-point underdogs—would defeat the Baltimore Colts. Twenty years later, race riots erupted days before the game, threatening its cancellation, and Stanley Wilson of the Cincinnati Bengals missed the game because of a crack binge. Miami has another advantage over most Super Bowl cities: It's a football town. So gaga are its residents about the game they named a main thoroughfare the Don Shula Expressway.

When I arrived in Miami two days before the game, the media were making the most of some petty squabbles between the coaches and the Broncos' superhuman quarterback, John Elway. I started to worry that this Miami Super Bowl might fall short. I certainly wasn't expecting any hijinks at the prayer breakfast we went to with friends on Saturday morning. The only memorable speaker was a Falcons defensive back named Eugene Robinson, who kept choking up as he explained how "humbled" he was to be receiving the Bart Starr Award for community involvement.

Twelve hours later, the media had their story: Robinson was nabbed in the heart of Miami's red-light district offering an undercover policewoman $40 for a service the local newscasters (with all due respect to the president) called "sex." Reporters banged out their "Miami Vice" articles, seizing on the claim in the game program that Robinson's "poise and savvy have brought stability to a secondary that still is striving for maturity."

For me, the best part of the feeding frenzy that followed was rediscovering a part of the sports culture I had forgotten: football pundits. On game day, I listened to Terry Bradshaw and Mike Lupica—football's rough equivalents of James Carville and Howard Fineman—alternately debate the finer points of Robinson's arrest and the effect it would have on the outcome of the Super Bowl. Wondering how they could get so animated over something so silly, I realized most Americans probably have the same thought when they hear political talking heads debate President Clinton's legal strategy and Ken Starr's leaks.

As for the game, it was good by Super Bowl standards, not so good by normal standards (the teams did set a Super Bowl record by scoring 30 points in the fourth quarter). This hardly mattered, though, as there was nearly as much to observe off the field as on. With beach balls being bopped around in the stands, fans mugging for the cameras, Cher lip-synching the national anthem, and '70s rock legends Kiss staging a pregame performance, the scene epitomized Miami kitsch.

As my father and I shuffled out of the stadium after the game, someone offered me $20 for my ticket stub. At first it seemed like an obvious sale, but then I pulled back. I may never attend another Super Bowl, whether in Miami or Minneapolis, and I realized I wanted some token to remind me of the fun we'd had at this one. I told the ticket buyer to get lost, and was happy I did.

Matthew Rees

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the weekly Standard

GUILTY AS CHARGED

This week, the American people, acting through their senators in Washington, will formally choose to retain Bill Clinton as president for the remainder of his elected term. What this decision might imply for our nation's culture and politics is no doubt an almost endless question. The White House scandal of 1998-99 will hang over us—whether or not we realize it, or want it to—for years to come.

In at least one no less ominous respect, however, the meaning of Clinton's acquittal is already clear. We are speaking here of the *de minimis* standards of integrity imposed on the federal government's executive branch. We would not have thought this a matter of dispute between competing philosophies of conservatism and liberalism. We would not have thought it *possible*. But it is now a great deal more than possible. It is an inescapable fact: There are certain circumstances, it turns out, in which public opinion—sustained by a nearly unanimous Democratic party—is prepared to accept obvious felony crimes by the president of the United States.

This seems to us a rather important point. The president's crimes are *obvious*. They are obvious even where the Washington press and political establishment—despite their self-professed and much-bemoaned "obsession" with the controversy—have so far failed to discern them. Consider, for example, what is widely considered the less persuasive of the two impeachment articles against the president: grand jury perjury. Consider, for that matter, what is widely considered the least persuasive element of this less persuasive charge: the suggestion that Bill Clinton perjured himself by postdating the inception of his "inappropriate intimate contact" with Monica Lewinsky.

Lewinsky has always been unequivocal on this point, and she reconfirmed it during her Senate deposition last Monday. The affair began on November 15, 1995, during the week-long "government shutdown" fight with Congress. At around 8 p.m., on a trip to the ladies' room, Lewinsky passed by George Stephanopoulos's West Wing office and noticed Clinton inside. Though the two had barely ever spoken before—she had done little more than introduce herself or wish him a "nice trip" at South Lawn departure ceremonies—the president beckoned her to join him. In a matter of minutes, she flashed him her famous thong panties and they drifted over to Clinton's private Oval Office hallway for a kiss.

Sometime over the course of the next two hours, thinking ahead, Lewinsky removed her thong. At around 10 p.m., the president again invited her to meet him in Stephanopoulos's office, from which they again walked to the hallway complex near the Oval Office. This time, as Paula Jones's attorneys would say, Clinton touched Lewinsky "with the intent to gratify." She was gratified, she later reported to the FBI, and she gratified the president in return—while he had an extended phone conversation with a member of the House of Representatives. At the end of which, the president said good-bye to his intern and went upstairs for dinner with his wife.

Why would Clinton behave this way with Monica Lewinsky? Perhaps, Lewinsky later mused to FBI investigators, "the president's regular girlfriend had been furloughed" by the budget battle and was temporarily stuck at home, unable to do her duty.

The president, for his part, says he did *not* behave this way. Not, at least, with so much desperate speed, and not so early as November 15, 1995. In a prepared statement read at the start of his grand jury appearance last August, Clinton acknowledged past personal wrongdoing with the young lady and expressed regret that "what began as a friendship" eventually—in "early 1996," no sooner—"came to include this conduct."

Now, nobody believes him about this, not even, we suspect, his own attorneys. But the question has only ever been: Does it matter? And the White House has always insisted, to great effect with congressional and media observers alike, that it does not. It is "an utterly meaningless disparity in testimony about dates that are of absolutely no consequence whatsoever," special counsel to the president Gregory Craig told the Senate on January 20. At worst, Clinton's defenders contend, the president fudged the chronology of his sexual relationship with an intern simply to avoid admitting one final, humiliating truth: that "what began as a friendship," based on their mutual interest in Lewinsky's g-string underwear, "came to include" some quickie sex

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acts—in the space of an hour and a half.

Petty vanity like this, all seem to be agreed, is not a criminal, much less *impeachable*, offense.

And everyone is wrong about that. Because petty vanity has almost nothing to do with the Clinton-Lewinsky disagreement over what happened on November 15, 1995.

Remember the immutable laws of physics by which this president's habit of mendacity is maintained. A Clinton lie typically expands to encompass all creation: "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky." The gasball of dishonesty only contracts, if ever, when challenged by overwhelming contradictory evidence: "The chance that the semen is not the president's," in the immortal words of the Starr impeachment referral, "is one in 7.87 trillion." And under such rare pressure, a Clinton falsehood does something sadly predictable: It atomizes into a whole series of brand-new falsehoods, each designed to defend the proposition that the president wasn't *really* lying in the first place.

This is the man's essential character. And when he is under investigation for perjury, the imperatives of his character and the requirements of his criminal defense merge neatly into a single impulse. He lies because he absolutely *has* to. As he has had to lie about what he did with Monica Lewinsky, and when.

IT IS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE HONOR THAT THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HAS PROVED UNWILLING TO ACQUIESCE IN A PRESIDENT'S CRIMES.

In his *Jones* litigation deposition in January 1998, when he was first asked whether he'd ever met with Lewinsky in the White House, Clinton said yes and *volunteered* that he'd seen her "two or three" times "when the Republican Congress shut the government down"—that is, during the third week of November 1995. The president clearly intended this to be taken as an innocent explanation: "The whole White House was being run by interns," he elaborated, "and she was assigned to work back in the chief of staff's office."

Were you and Lewinsky ever together in the hallway adjacent to the Oval Office, Clinton was asked a few moments later? They were never alone, he suggested in reply, but she had once been "back there with a pizza that she brought to me and to others." The president was not questioned about when this pizza delivery might have taken place. Again, he *volunteered* that information, and again, he placed the event in the third week of November 1995. It had been "during the government shutdown," Clinton offered, "when Ms. Lewinsky was still an intern but working the chief of staff's office because all the employees had to go home."

If Monica Lewinsky "told someone that she had a sexual affair with you beginning in November 1995, would that be a lie?" Clinton was finally asked, as this portion of his *Jones* deposition wound to a close. "It's certainly not the truth," he responded. "It would not be the truth."

This last assertion was a bald-faced lie, of course. And it was one lie the president could not possibly amend or expand before the grand jury last August. His sworn January denial of a "sexual affair" with Lewinsky had been open-ended; the infamous, tortuously restricted definition of "sexual relations" had been introduced only *later* in the Jones deposition. Nor could Clinton now claim to have had a memory failure about sexual activity in November 1995. Without prompting by the Jones lawyers, he had freely recalled the nature of his contact with Lewinsky in that period, almost to the day. No man remembers pepperoni but forgets the oral sex that came with it.

This, then, was the pickle that confronted Bill Clinton in August 1998. He would be forced—by Lewinsky's blue dress—to admit that he *had* had some sort of "sexual affair" with her. But he could not concede a further truth—that it had indeed been sex "beginning in November 1995"—without implicating himself in a prior perjury. So what did he do? He told the grand jury that the relationship had not turned intimate until two months later, in January 1996.

Motive, means, opportunity, materiality, falsehood: grand jury perjury. Here again, *even here*, Clinton is guilty as charged.

And yet he will be acquitted on what seems certain to be a near-party-line Senate vote. A majority of Americans will tell pollsters that they are pleased at this result, but distressed at the "partisan" process by which it was achieved. This magazine will continue to take an almost opposite view. It is a matter of considerable honor that the Republican party, alone among major American institutions, has proved stubbornly unwilling to acquiesce in a president's felonies. The Democratic party's performance, by contrast, is a disgrace of stunning magnitude. As a consequence of this sharp partisan divide, the question whether a president really is obliged to obey the law remains open to future political debate. That is the only small note of hope, it seems to us, in the outcome of this entire ugly mess.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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THE GOP AND THE POLLS

by Fred Barnes

"VOTERS PLEDGING PAYBACK IN 2000"—so says the *Washington Post* about public anger at Republicans for impeaching President Clinton. Richard Berke of the *New York Times* says there's "danger" for Republicans in punishing Clinton for moral misbehavior. Which Republicans exactly? "High-profile impeachment Republicans," insists Ron Brownstein of the *Los Angeles Times*, especially Rep. James Rogan of California, the most intense of the House impeachment managers. Even the revered Rep. Henry Hyde, the chief manager, is suffering politically in his reliably Republican Illinois district, according to a *Chicago Tribune* poll.

Cheer up, Republicans! This is all wishful thinking by the media. True, the public is not crazy about the impeachment and trial of the president. But there's no serious evidence Republicans are bound to pay a horrible price—or any price at all—in November 2000 for having pressed perjury and obstruction-of-justice counts against Clinton. Oh, there's evidence all right of a dip in party favorability, and Republicans are down as much as 10 percentage points in voters' expectations of whether they'll vote for a Democratic or GOP congressional candidate in 2000. But these numbers fluctuate month to month and simply aren't predictive of what may happen 21 months from now. "It's like asking what salad dressing you're going to have on Election Day," says polling expert Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute. "No one has a clue."

Polls aside, there are three big holes in the argument that impeachment is killing Republicans. We've been told by White House defenders for the past year that folks outside the Beltway just don't care about the Clinton scandal. This is correct, infuriatingly so. Now, however, they'd have us believe these same apathetic voters will care passionately about the scandal and impeachment in late 2000, nearly two years after Clinton's acquittal. Indeed, voters will be so mad about mistreatment of Clinton they'll eagerly vote Republicans out of office. In other words: a delayed backlash by the indifferent masses. It simply makes no sense. "If only 18 or 19 percent are paying attention to this, why is it going to be a problem?" asks GOP pollster Linda DiVall. It's probably not, the *Los Angeles Times* found in a national survey in late January. Most voters give it "far less weight" than politicians do, the poll concluded.

Hole number two is the notion that impeachment is the *main* cause of the GOP's current troubles. It hasn't helped, that's for sure. But this is a party that lacks issues and leaders. It's going through a period of self-flagellation, while Democrats are still giddy over their pickup of five House seats last November. At the moment, voters show a preference for Democrats in handling practically every issue, including tax cuts and crime. Why shouldn't they? Republicans haven't fleshed out strong positions on these or any other issues. And don't forget the country's in economic heaven, with Clinton and Democrats getting the bulk of the credit. Problems? Republicans have plenty, but impeachment is the least of them.

Understanding the third hole in the impeachment-is-death case takes a little imagination. You have to imagine what condition the GOP would be in if Republican defectors had prevented the House from impeaching Clinton or if fearful Republicans had voted with Democrats to dismiss the impeachment counts without even a truncated Senate trial. Had either happened, the party would now be in a state of civil war. Conservatives would be plotting primary challenges of anti-impeachment moderates. Religious conservatives would be threatening to bolt the party. Under attack, Northern and secular Republicans would be feeling distressed. Big donors would be stepping up their criticism of social conservatives. Rank-and-file Republicans, the one solidly pro-impeachment group in the country, would be suffering acute heartburn. And Republican poll numbers would be worse than they are now.

The numbers *are* bad, but only some of them. Yes, the generic number—will you vote Republican or Democratic in the next House election?—is nothing to brag about. In DiVall's national polling, for example, Republicans are down by 7 percentage points. But they were up 4 last August, and down 5 in October, and then beat Democrats narrowly in the total vote in

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House races in November. The *Washington Post*/ABC News poll had Republicans down 48 percent to 44 percent just before the 1994 election, in which they won 52 House seats. So the generic number is not only volatile, it's also fallible. More worrisome is the party's unfavorable rating overall. It is worse than it's been in years. Even so, it's only slightly worse.

The presidential matchups tell a different and far more hopeful story for Republicans. In virtually every national poll, Texas governor George W. Bush and Elizabeth Dole are running substantially ahead of Vice President Al Gore. The *Los Angeles Times* puts Bush's lead at 18 points, Dole's at eight. Worse for Gore, crossovers are tilting Republican. While 10 percent of Republicans favor Gore, 23 percent of Democrats prefer Bush. As for independents, 68 percent go for Bush. Can a party doing this well in presidential matchups against the likely Democratic nominee be in total meltdown? No.

At worst, it suggests a 2000 scenario in which Republicans win the White House but lose the House of Representatives—which was plausible before Clinton was impeached. In fact, Republicans at this point are likely to lose the House, but, again, not because of impeachment. Brownstein of the *Los Angeles Times* theorizes there's a connection between impeachment and public distaste for both Gore and congressional Republicans. Gore suffers because of public disapproval of Clinton's conduct, Republicans because impeaching Clinton for that very conduct is unpopular. Hmm. I agree with Brownstein on one point. "This intriguing alignment of attitudes toward Gore and Congress could prove utterly ephemeral," he says. More likely, the entire election will be driven by the presidential campaign. If Bush wins, Republicans will probably hold the House, and vice versa.

Let's look at the two House members said to be harmed by impeachment, Rogan and Hyde. Reporter Juliet Eilperin writes in the *Washington Post* that Rogan's "newfound prominence hasn't exactly gone over that well with some of his constituents." She quotes one who vows to vote against Rogan. But the voter isn't identified as Republican or Democrat or as a Rogan supporter or foe in the past. So the quote is meaningless. And the others in the story who insist impeachment is hurting Republicans are all Democratic operatives. Rogan, of course, may lose in 2000. The changing demographics of his suburban L.A. district have caused a Democratic trend. And he does face one impeachment-related problem. Anger among Democratic activists assures he'll be targeted in 2000 and face a well-funded opponent. Targeting, though, is a zero-sum game. If Rogan is targeted, then another vulnerable Republican won't be.

As for Hyde, the *Tribune* poll found that one-third of the voters in his district think less of him because he's pushed impeachment. Thirty-eight percent said they disapprove of the way he's handled the whole impeachment drive. Roughly one quarter insist he's been too partisan. The question is whether these numbers reflect anything other than a rallying around Clinton by Democrats. The president got 40 percent of the vote in the district in 1996. Thus, Democrats alone—and not even all of them—may be responsible for dismay with Hyde. So what's the big deal?

Last weekend, House Republicans huddled in Williamsburg, Virginia, to discuss strategy and, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "lick their impeachment-backlash wounds." Rep. Tom Davis, the new chairman of the House GOP campaign committee, warned them they need a new agenda. "Does impeachment hurt us in 2000? No," he told the *Washington Post*. "But does it hurt us today? Yes." It hurts by crowding out any Republican message besides impeachment. That will end on February 12 with Clinton's acquittal. Afterwards, Republicans will be tested. If they have strong, clear positions on taxes, education, and Social Security, they'll be fine in 2000. If not, they'll lose the House for sure. Just don't blame impeachment for that.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

WHAT DEFENSE INCREASE?

by Gary Schmitt

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED $12.6 billion increase in defense spending is an illusion. To start, the increase amounts to little over $4 billion in new budget authority. The remaining $8 billion is a product of Defense Department accounting adjustments, delayed spending on other military programs, and unspecified cancellations of previous appropriations. Stripped of its packaging, the administration's budget would hike defense spending for fiscal year 2000 by a mere 1.5 percent over last year's budget projection for this year. In fact, when Clinton's request for all defense-related programs (Defense Department and defense-related Energy

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It just doesn't make sense. One day the President wants Americans to take more responsibility for their retirement. The next, he wants to levy new taxes on annuities and life insurance. But any tax on policyholders – direct or indirect – undermines the goal of a secure retirement for all Americans. And we can't fix Social Security without a strong private retirement system.

Congress and the President should be helping Americans protect their families today and secure their retirement for tomorrow. That shouldn't be a taxing experience.

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Department activities) is compared with last year's final budget authority for the same, the total represents a real, inflation-adjusted decline in defense spending.

Obviously, this is not even a modest step and will not correct the flagging state of America's armed forces. Under this year's budget, procurement spending will actually decline from the level projected in last year's budget. For the fifth straight year, procurement will fall billions short of what the Joint Chiefs previously identified as necessary to keep modernization plans on track. Nor is there any increase for military research and development. To the contrary, spending on defense R&D continues to decline. And, as for readiness, the proposed 5 percent increase in funding hardly begins to repair the substantial and well-documented erosion in the military's combat capabilities. According to the armed services themselves, the administration's budget for fiscal year 2000 will leave the Army underfunded by $2.5 billion, the Navy and Air Force facing a $3 billion shortfall, and the Marine Corps with $870 million less than it needs to meet current requirements.

The picture doesn't get any better in the years that follow. The vast majority of the proposed increase in defense spending that the administration is boasting about occurs only *after* the administration has left office. Whoever is elected in 2000 will have to fight the battles the Clinton administration only pretends to fight. Meanwhile, of the last three budgets Clinton will influence—2000, 2001, 2002—two will see *real reductions* in defense spending if his plan is adopted.

FOR ALL THE NEW TALK OF A MISSILE DEFENSE, THE REALITY IS BURIED IN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET: AN ACTUAL DECLINE IN FUNDING.

Any proposed increases, moreover, may well evaporate because of administration politics over Social Security reform and renegotiation of the balanced budget law. Under the law, current caps on discretionary federal spending make it virtually impossible to increase the sums allotted to defense. Unless the law is rewritten and the current surplus in federal revenues is made available for spending, there will be no increase in the Pentagon's budget. Yet the White House and Secretary of Defense William Cohen have made it clear that the surplus will be off limits until Congress accepts some form of the administration's plan for reforming Social Security. In short, if you're in the Defense Department, don't hold your breath waiting for new funds.

But even if one suspends disbelief for the moment and accepts the idea that the proposed increase for defense is serious, the administration's numbers still fall short of what is needed to carry out the country's declared military strategy and recapitalize its forces. Based on the underfunded programs identified by the heads of the services, unfunded operations in the Balkans and Persian Gulf, and cost-of-living adjustments for the military's new retirement plan, the staff of the House Armed Services Committee has estimated that Clinton's proposed $80 billion in new funds in the out-years may cover only half of what is needed. Having given the military short shrift since it came into office, the administration—aided and abetted by GOP budget hawks—has dug such a hole for the Pentagon that a far more substantial increase is necessary to get us out of the security predicament we find ourselves in today.

The bait and switch that the president has pulled off on the defense budget is best captured in his plans for a national missile defense. Worried that the issue was becoming politically salient with the warning from the Rumsfeld Commission report last fall and North Korean ballistic missile tests, Secretary Cohen made his announcement with fanfare the day after the State of the Union: The administration was now committed to building a national missile defense regardless of ABM Treaty restrictions and Russian objections. Yet buried in the president's budget is the reality of the administration's policy: an actual decline in money for national missile defense from last year's budget, a rescission in the funds Congress added to missile defense in last year's supplemental, and a decision to postpone deployment of any national system for two years later than it had originally promised.

Given the president's record of cutting defense expenditures substantially every year since coming to office, his latest plan to increase defense dollars should be seen for what it is, a political sleight of hand. In key respects, the Clinton administration is following the example of the Carter administration—a late show of concern about the state of the armed forces generated in part by its own dubious stewardship in national security affairs and in part by the approach of a presidential campaign. But actually, this is unfair to the Carter administration: Its change of heart on security issues was serious, if belated, and its proposed increase in defense spending was real.

Gary Schmitt is the executive director of the Project for the New American Century.

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The Race to Replace Newt

by Tucker Carlson

Cobb County, Ga.

Johnny Isakson remembers the Republican revolution like it was four years ago. Newt Gingrich became speaker of the House, and then . . . What happened next? Isakson, a longtime state senator from Georgia's Sixth District who will almost certainly replace Gingrich in Congress, seems as good a person as any to ask. He is clearly uncomfortable with the question. Isakson surveys the suburban Atlanta traffic through the windshield of his Chevy truck, fiddles with the air conditioning knobs on the dashboard. "What really carried the day in '94 was the Contract With America," he says. "After that there was a loss of focus." In retrospect, Isakson says, Republicans really "should have danced with the one that brung them." The Contract With America, meanwhile, could have used "a second chapter."

Interesting ideas, except, as it turns out, they're not ideas. Pressed to explain what he means, Isakson offers no hint of what the Contract's next chapter might have contained, or of who, specifically, the Republicans should have danced with. Instead, he trails off into silence. "Maybe," he says, finally, "there should have been a little bit more emphasis on the governing side."

If Isakson seems hazy on what became of the fire-breathing 104th Congress, it may be because he can hardly imagine that such a Congress once existed. The belligerence, the grandiose promises, and ideological fervor of the young Republican majority—it all seems so early '90s, so partisan. Johnny Isakson, by contrast, is very much a Republican of the new millennium, a self-described "compassionate conservative" for whom bipartisan compromise and poll-tested buzzwords are instinctive. Isakson would have been out of step as a freshman in the 104th Congress. He's likely to be a hit in the 106th.

Newt Gingrich himself appears to think so. Days after announcing his plans to retire, Gingrich publicly threw his support behind Isakson. A number of well-known Georgia political figures followed suit, including retired Democratic governor Zell Miller and former Gingrich opponent Michael Coles. By the time the luminaries finished endorsing him, the only Democrat who bothered to enter the race against Isakson was Gary "Bats" Pelphrey, a perennial candidate who is widely believed to merit his nickname. From the beginning, Isakson has looked like the inevitable winner. Still, he has taken no chances. An affluent real estate executive, Isakson has hired an expensive pollster and media consultants from Washington, and raised more than $1 million. By early February, Isakson's campaign was spending $120,000 a week on television advertising alone.

While far ahead of its opponents in the polls, the campaign is probably wise to keep spending. Isakson has unusually energetic enemies, beginning with the district's politically active anti-abortion groups. During the 1996 Senate primary, Isakson received a great deal of publicity for running a commercial trumpeting his pro-choice views. In the spot, which featured his wife and teenage daughter, Isakson accused the other Republicans in the race of seeking "to make criminals of women and their doctors" by banning abortion. While the ad was popular with some suburban women (reportedly including Gingrich's wife, Marianne), it enraged many evangelicals. It also contributed to Isakson's reputation as a politician willing to do anything to get elected. "He used his daughter as a prop to promote abortion," says Tom Perdue, who managed the campaign of Isakson's main opponent in the primary, Guy Millner. "Who would do that to their child?"

And the ad, says Perdue, is the least of Isakson's sins. Perdue, easily the state's most seasoned and powerful political consultant, has known Isakson for more than 20 years. His verdict: "Johnny is a total, absolute phony, an utter hypocrite," "a thoroughly cowardly human being" who "has done more to hurt the Republican party in Georgia than any other person. You can't trust him. He is a liar. His word is worthless." For the last four years, Perdue says, Isakson "has been doing anything to hold high office. Maybe he will get it this time. But for anybody who cares about the future of this country, it's a shame."

Isakson responds to attacks from evangelicals by pointing to his long record as a Sunday school teacher. "I'm a very religious guy," he says heatedly. "I believe in my church, the Methodist Church." Isakson may swing fellow Methodists with this defense, but many conservatives in the district remain convinced that his candidacy represents a sellout of the Republican party from within. For these voters, Christina Jeffrey is the obvious choice.

Jeffrey, a political science professor at Kennesaw State University outside Atlanta, is also running for the Sixth District seat, and like Isakson, she has personal ties to Gingrich. Indeed, Jeffrey was the first person Gingrich hired as the newly Republican Congress convened in 1995. For about a week, Jeffrey was the official House historian, until a White House staffer checked the clip files and discovered that she had once been accused of making anti-Semitic comments. Jeffrey defended herself by arguing—persuasively, virtually everyone involved later agreed—that her com-

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ments had been meant as a parody of liberal relativism, and were being grotesquely misread. [See: "The Vindication of Christina Jeffrey," THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Dec. 18, 1995.] Gingrich fired her anyway.

Jeffrey returned to her job at Kennesaw State, minus about $35,000 in moving costs and lost income. Months later, she sued Gingrich and several other members of Congress for more than $20 million, on grounds they had defamed her. (The suit is still pending, says Jeffrey, "though I don't know exactly where it is.") She also began something of a crusade against Gingrich, at one point publishing a newsletter called *The Jeffrey Report* that attacked the speaker for "moving left" and neglecting core conservative values.

Jeffrey's criticisms of Gingrich appear sincere enough, and she applies most of them to Isakson as well. Jeffrey's base of supporters consists mostly of committed social conservatives already active in politics: pro-lifers, gun owners, home schoolers. (Jeffrey herself teaches the youngest of her five children at home.) The Sixth District is famously conservative—Cobb County's main artery is named the Larry McDonald Memorial Highway, after the late chairman of the John Birch Society who represented the area in Congress—and twenty years ago such a coalition might have been enough to win an election. But the district is changing rapidly, becoming much more affluent and better educated—"more like Winnetka every day," in the words of Jeffrey's husband, Robert. The farmers and white refugees from Atlanta who once made up the bulk of district-six voters cared about Christina Jeffrey's issues. Yuppies don't.

Christina Jeffrey

Kevin Chadwick

In spite of the odds, the Jeffrey campaign has received some national attention. Rep. Ron Paul of Texas recently made an appearance on Jeffrey's behalf. Former presidential candidate Alan Keyes is scheduled to arrive this week for a much-anticipated "pro-life rally and ice cream social." But the campaign still has very little money. With two weeks remaining until the election, Jeffrey had yet to run even a single radio ad. Barring a natural catastrophe on Election Day that keeps all but pro-lifers home, she is unlikely to win.

Which leaves Johnny Isakson, compassionate conservative, as heir to Newt Gingrich's seat in Congress. Despite what his critics charge, Isakson is not a liberal. He is a skilled political operator, well-informed about every issue that could possibly affect the state of Georgia, someone who naturally places an emphasis on, as he puts it, the governing side. If Isakson tends to answer questions without reference to his own beliefs—ask him if he favors term limits, for example, and he'll explain that as a state legislator, he voted to allow the public to vote on term limits—at least he has most of the Republican themes down. He has plenty of hostile things to say about taxes.

And he has impressive self-control. Consider his personal habits. Johnny Isakson looks like a smoker. He has the cough, the teeth, the leathery, W.H. Auden face. An aide confirms that Isakson does indeed smoke—"His grandfather was a tobacco farmer," the aide explains—but apart from his appearance, you'd never know it. A key feature of compassionate conservatism is not smoking in public, and Isakson pulls it off well.

Last week, Isakson made it through an entire fund-raising lunch with local developers, during which he spoke eloquently and at length about transportation policy (Should a monorail through Cobb County run in the center of the highway or beside it?), the consequences of saltwater long-line fishing, and the minutiae of literacy testing in state elementary schools, without having a cigarette. From the lunch, Isakson went directly to an interview with a reporter. Still no cigarette.

After about 20 minutes, however, the candidate began to grow irritable. By the time the conversation turned to impeachment, Isakson was outright grouchy. Asked if the president should be convicted, Isakson refused to answer. "That's the Senate's decision," he replied, "and I know they're dealing with it." Sure, but everybody has an opinion. What's yours? "I'm not running for the Senate," he said. Yes, but aren't you planning to challenge Sen. Cleland in 2002? Isakson ignored the question completely. "Let me give you directions to the airport," he said.

In the Republican party of the next millennium, Johnny Isakson is the kind of politician who could go places. With the help of the nicotine patch, he might even become a senator.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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SUPPLY-SIDE SCHISMS

by Matthew Rees

IF SUPPLY-SIDERS EVER HAD REASON to be optimistic, they do now. Tax cuts are easier to pass with a budget surplus in Washington, and congressional Republicans have embraced a supply-side article of faith: across-the-board reductions in income tax rates. Besides, the GOP has dropped two decidedly non-supply-side ideas: using the surplus to pay down the debt and trying to pass constituency-driven tax reforms, such as the family tax credit. So what do the supply-siders think of the GOP proposals? "It's the least they could do," grouses Bruce Bartlett of the National Center for Policy Analysis.

Bartlett's pessimism reflects a longstanding distrust between the Republican party and the noisy squad of supply-side economists, writers, and activists. Ever since the early Reagan years when the supply-siders rose to prominence, party leaders have held them at arm's length. Before he was reborn as a tax cutter in the 1996 presidential campaign, Bob Dole used to wisecrack: "The good news is that a bus of supply-siders went off a cliff. The bad news is that three seats were empty." The feeling is mutual. Dole's fumbling of the tax issue in 1996 intensified supply-side irritation with Republicans, and the gulf has only widened as Congress has failed to pass sweeping tax-rate reductions.

BOB DOLE USED TO WISECRACK: THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT A BUS OF SUPPLY-SIDERS WENT OFF A CLIFF. THE BAD NEWS IS THREE SEATS WERE EMPTY.

This year could be different, but the supply-siders aren't ready to applaud. Their chief concern is that the leading GOP tax-cut bills, introduced by John Kasich in the House and Rod Grams in the Senate, propose reducing marginal tax rates by just 10 percent (the Reagan cuts, by contrast, totaled 25 percent). Bartlett points out that even if this were approved, it would offset less than one-third of all the Clinton tax increases. And there's no guarantee the 10 percent reduction won't be slashed to 5 percent or less in negotiations with the White House. "Republicans seem to be leading with their compromise position," complains Steve Moore, director of fiscal policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute. He'd like to see someone in Congress propose a 30 percent rate cut along the lines Dan Quayle is advocating.

The second source of supply-side discontent is a personnel squabble. There's an obscure agency in Washington called the Congressional Budget Office, and one of its mandates is to predict the rate at which the economy will grow. This figure is then used by the Joint Committee on Taxation to analyze how a tax cut would affect revenues and the economy.

For the past two decades, supply-side economists and many of Congress's tax-cutting Republicans have charged that the CBO is dominated by Keynesians whose pessimistic economic forecasts have undermined tax-cut proposals. Upon winning a congressional majority four years ago, the Republicans installed a new CBO director, June O'Neill. But her failure to provide the intellectual ammunition for rate reductions so disappointed the GOP that Newt Gingrich considered having her sacked last year. Instead, the Republicans let her finish her four-year term, and she wisely opted not to seek another.

The CBO vacancy had supply-siders drooling at the prospect of installing one of their own. There was just one problem. Responsibility for selecting the new CBO director fell to the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Pete Domenici, who has been so hostile to tax cuts the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* once called him "John Maynard Domenici." Wanting nevertheless to appear impartial, Domenici agreed to interview two candidates favored by the supply-siders: J.D. Foster of the Tax Foundation and David Malpass of Bear Stearns. But Steve Bell, an influential Domenici aide, made it clear to supply-siders at a breakfast late last year that neither Foster nor Malpass would be selected. Bell also signaled his favored candidate was Dan Crippen, a former aide to Howard Baker and to the Reagan White House.

The supply-siders pretty well know each other, and Crippen clearly isn't part of the club. Indeed, his tenure with Baker made him suspect (and his alliance with the blunt-speaking Bell didn't help). Supply-siders remember Baker as an obstacle to the Reagan tax cuts—he called them a "riverboat gamble"—and they feared Crippen would bring the same skepticism to the CBO. Supply-siders were doubly worried about having a tax-cut skeptic as CBO director because the influential senior staffers of the Senate Budget Committee and the Joint Committee on Taxation have records of opposing income-tax reductions.

Thus, when Crippen's name began circulating late last year, the supply-siders mobilized. In December, 28 of them, including Steve Forbes and Jack Kemp, went public with the qualifications they believed the next CBO director should have. They wanted a "practicing

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economist with considerable hands-on experience in applied economic analysis," someone with a "substantial publication record," and someone free of perceived conflicts of interest "arising from his or her previous business relationships." That pretty much ruled out Crippen, who's done little economic analysis, has no publication record to speak of, and has countless "business relationships" by virtue of having been a lobbyist for the past ten years.

The supply-siders have no shortage of allies in Congress, but their appeal fell on deaf ears. When no Senate Republican was willing to lift a finger to block Crippen, Kemp called Trent Lott, a friend from their days in the House, and pleaded with him to act. Lott put a hold on Crippen's appointment and forced him to go through another round of interviews, but this was primarily intended to appease Kemp. Lott wasn't going to be the only Republican to tangle with Domenici over Crippen, and according to a source in Lott's office, Crippen's appointment—made official on February 3—was never in jeopardy.

This has supply-siders like Bartlett predicting four more years of the status quo. Crippen, though, may prove a pleasant surprise. He's no supply-sider, but people who know him say he appreciates supply-side thinking in a way that O'Neill never did. His considerable Washington experience also equips him to cope with the political wrangling that is a huge part of the director's job. And the current overwhelming Republican support for tax cuts (even Domenici has come around) will ease the first-year headaches that have plagued CBO directors in the past.

With the GOP's unpopularity reconfirmed by every new poll, the grim joke circulating in Washington is that there are only two sure things in the Republican party these days. One of them is taxes. The other is death. Supply-siders like Cato's Moore say if the Republicans want to avert the latter, they'd better do something about the former. Now more than ever.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

BILINGUAL BULLYING

by Jim Littlejohn and Roger Clegg

DOCUMENTS RECENTLY OBTAINED from the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) reveal the agency's systematic abuse of its authority during the Clinton administration. Under the direction of Norma Cantu, OCR has bullied school districts all over the country into implementing bilingual education programs that are bad law and bad policy. It has done so surreptitiously and with dubious legal justification.

The abuses are documented in a recent report published by the Center for Equal Opportunity, based on a review of approximately 160 "compliance letters" sent by OCR to school systems in 1996 and 1997. In a terse statement, Cantu called the report a "misleading interpretation of the real efforts of OCR," but she offered no specific rebuttal and has disputed none of the facts in the report.

The problem is this: School districts are supposed to be allowed wide discretion in how they teach the English language to limited-English-proficient (LEP) children. But the Office for Civil Rights has an ideological preference for bilingual education, which segregates LEP students from students proficient in English for years, during which time they are instructed primarily in their native language and taught English only slowly. The alternative and better approach uses rapid immersion in English.

OCR has no legal authority to pressure school districts to implement bilingual education, yet it does so. Its highhandedness seems to become most pronounced in Democratic administrations. But the bureaucrats have generally lacked the nerve to announce their demand for bilingual education formally, let alone write it into law. Instead, they have pushed their agenda furtively but no less coercively, using "technical assistance" sessions, informal negotiations, and phone calls that minimize any paper trail. But the compliance letters now make clear what is going on.

OCR's investigators are constantly in the classroom: They look over teachers' shoulders, second-guess teachers and administrators, judge the quality of instructional materials, and generally intrude in ways never contemplated by the drafters of the civil rights statutes—the same statutes the agency supposedly enforces. OCR also encroaches on educational and staffing decisions, overrides parental choices, enforces quotas for gifted-and-talented programs, and requires burdensome evaluation and reporting procedures. But the major problem with the approach OCR wants local schools to take is that it identifies too many students as limited-English-proficient. It results in students—particularly Hispanics—who speak only English being placed in bilingual programs conducted in a language

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they do not understand.

This comes about because of the way OCR requires districts to use "home language" surveys of all their students. If any family member, even a grandparent, speaks a language other than English—even if there is no evidence or claim that the *child* speaks any language other than English—that student must be tested for English fluency. If the student then scores below a certain percentile—often the 40th or 50th percentile—or otherwise fails to achieve well academically, he or she is labeled limited-English-proficient and assigned to a bilingual program. Of course, by definition half of all children in the United States score below the 50th percentile on standardized tests, and many children proficient in English are poor students.

Not only does OCR lack the authority to force school districts to adopt any particular method of English instruction, but its method of choice—bilingual education—often violates federal law. When implemented OCR's way, bilingual education programs segregate children on the basis of national origin, in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and provide them with substandard language instruction, in violation of the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunities Act.

School districts that balk at accepting OCR's version of what the law requires face expensive legal proceedings (either an administrative hearing or referral to the Department of Justice) to avoid loss of all federal funding. Consequently, few schools challenge OCR's requirements. In recent years, only two school systems, the Denver Public Schools and the San Juan School District in southeastern Utah, have challenged OCR when it pressured them to embrace its brand of bilingual education. Both have spent large sums of money defending their positions and now appear likely to settle the cases to avoid further expenditures.

California was one of the states where OCR worked hard with state officials to ensure that bilingual education was given the highest priority. Because of the evident failure of the policy, the state's voters passed an initiative this June effectively ending it. A federal judge quickly declined to block the new law's implementation since he did not find it to be inconsistent with any federal civil rights provision. But some California school districts have raised questions about complying with the new law because they believe they may still be bound to implement bilingual-plan agreements entered into with the Office for Civil Rights.

An essential attribute of the rule of law is that the government's rules are publicly known and subject to open debate and formal objection—not secretly adopted and enforced. The government's standards for students who are not native speakers of English should be clarified, subjected to public comment, and formally adopted as regulations.

OCR's record also calls for oversight hearings before Congress. Tom Tancredo—a former regional representative of the Department of Education and recently elected member of Congress—is especially interested in the issue. At a recent press conference announcing the newly uncovered evidence of OCR abuse, he called bilingual education "a political activity rather than an educational activity." He's right, and of course Cantu was made the head of OCR because of her career as a bilingual-education lawyer and activist.

Norma Cantu

Kevin Chadwick

OCR's enforcement policies affect thousands of school systems across the nation—virtually every public system, since all but a handful receive federal money—and the activities of its staff strongly influence educational decisions and spending priorities. A federal civil rights enforcement agency should not act as an advocate for particular instructional programs or curricular methodologies and certainly should not do so on behalf of a narrow political constituency.

After more than 25 years of experimentation, the best research shows bilingual education to be a less effective instructional method than English-intensive alternatives. The Office for Civil Rights should not be allowed to turn a blind eye to the segregative effects of bilingual education or its pedagogical failures. And it certainly should not be allowed to clandestinely coerce schools into following such policies, claiming a legal authority the agency does not have.

Jim Littlejohn is a former director in the Office for Civil Rights and the author of the report on OCR. Roger Clegg is general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity.

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THE CHARACTER TEST

by Eric Felten

As PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON has told us time and again, there are three legs to the New Democratic platform: opportunity, responsibility, and community. It is a troika that might, in good conscience, have been trimmed to just opportunity and community (this is, after all, a man whose lack of personal responsibility extends, among other things, to phone sex on unsecured lines). But it's a credit to Slick's chutzpah that he is still flogging the R-word. Here is Clinton at the Democratic Leadership Council's annual shindig in December: "Seven years ago I spoke to the Democratic Leadership Council," Clinton crowed, pointing to his successes in the intervening years. "I said that we had to offer the American people a new choice rooted in old values . . . opportunity, responsibility, community."

Clinton may be comfortable preaching the "old value" of responsibility, but the obvious ironies pose problems for his allies, problems on display in the current issue of the DLC's magazine, the *New Democrat*. The organization Bill Clinton helped found and once headed stands by its man. Not only does the *New Democrat* reprint Clinton's DLC speech, the cover of the magazine is devoted to an anti-impeachment editorial. Under the banner headline "The GOP on Trial," the cover reads, "Whatever damage the President has caused the nation pales in comparison to the damage being caused by the GOP drive to remove him from office." The *New Democrat* dismisses Republicans as "helpless legalists" and "zealous moralists."

No one can accuse the big-thinkers at the DLC of legalism or moralism. At least, not if one looks to another article in the *New Democrat*, "Certifiably American?" which questions the fairness of the citizenship test administered by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Authors Harry Boyte and Nancy Kari are quick to point out that the average American would have a tough time answering the civics and history questions that stand between immigrants and citizenship. Would-be Americans need to correctly answer at least eight out of ten questions, which include stumpers such as, "Name the 13 original colonies," and, "How many members are there in the House of Representatives?" It isn't that Boyte and Kari really think the test is that hard—especially since the INS helps prospective citizens prepare by giving them all the questions and answers well in advance. No, Boyte and Kari just don't like the fact that any citizenship test is given, arguing that "we have essentially empowered a small federal agency to set our nation's official definition of citizenship—to define for us what it means to be an American." This is especially troubling since that definition is, well, problematic for the DLC's poster boy.

You see, the INS doesn't just ask a string of quiz show brain-teasers. The agency also inquires into whether the applicant has "good moral character." Most famously, immigrants are asked: "Are you now, or have you ever been, associated with the Communist Party or ever knowingly aided or supported the Communist Party directly or indirectly through another organization, group or person, or advocated, taught, believed in, or knowingly furthered the interests of communism?" But they are also asked about their moral fiber and psychological stability:

"Are you a habitual drunkard?"

"Have you ever been confined as a patient in a mental institution?"

"Have you ever knowingly committed any crime for which you have not been convicted?"

"Have you ever advocated or practiced polygamy?"

Now, some might think it perfectly reasonable—given the limited number of slots for new citizens—that we weed out drunken commie lunatics and felons with supernumerary wives. But not the *New Democrat*. Boyte and Kari sneer at the character questions, dismissing them as "a geologic core sample of our nation's political and social biases." It seems the INS is guilty of a new genre of bigotry: anti-scofflaw-ism.

You can't blame the *New Democrat* too much—they're just trying to be consistent. What else is the party of Clinton to do? If committing crimes and getting away with them is good enough for the president, who are we to say that the very same fault should disqualify anyone in the teeming masses from gaining citizenship? Equality under the law demands no less.

A more appropriate test of character, according to the *New Democrat*, is "civic involvement." Again, it's only fair: The Big He thinks himself virtuous on the strength of his civic involvement. Who cares about the odd grope of a job applicant or rewards to a sexually accommodating employee? The president, after all, is demonstrably committed to civil rights. Policy initiatives trump personal conduct. So, with a desire that the president be treated no differently than any other American (actual or aspiring), the *New Democrat* proposes that immigrants be judged by their work in the community, not condemned for pesky personal peccadilloes. That's good news for the polygamist community—the applicant with a harem need only promise that all his wives will suit up for AmeriCorps.

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THE PRESIDENT AND THE POLLS

Check Out Those Job Approval Ratings!

By Noemie Emery

Polls tell the truth—if you look closely enough. And Bill Clinton's poll numbers over the past year have been impressive indeed. At the time he was impeached his job approval rating had reached a staggering 72 percent. But there is a striking gap between polls and feelings at the heart of the Clinton presidency. Public respect for the man is as low as his job approval ratings are high. This is commonly thought to tell us something revealing about the people. But the polls are actually more interesting for what they tell us about the president. He is like a kid who gets straight A's by flattering the teacher: There is doubt about what the grade signifies.

Bill Clinton has devoted himself to the getting of good poll numbers with astonishing single-mindedness. He loves polls more than any cause. High poll numbers seem to be like a mother's warm embrace to him, conveying approval, affection, and security. He may have started as president by wanting to do things, but the things he did—Hillary's health care plan, gays in the armed forces—brought criticism, ridicule, and public rejection. They brought the big chill of the 1994 election, a political near-death experience he vowed never to repeat. As a result, from 1995 onwards, he has not done a thing without polling first. Polls became the end in themselves, more than governance. Issues were picked when they polled well, used to boost his own numbers and then dropped. He polled to find out where to go on vacation. He polled to manipulate feelings of grief, fear, and sorrow, and turn them to gold in the ratings. He polled when the federal building was blown up in April 1995 in Oklahoma City, to find out how to link his critics to militant terrorists. He polled after the crash of TWA 800 in July 1996, pleased when he found out that his well-planned and well-publicized meetings with families of the victims made 50 percent of those who heard of them more likely to vote for him than for Bob Dole. He even climbed aboard a train to the 1996 Democratic convention just to exhort Americans in speeches along the way that their country was on the "right track." And soon the numbers of people responding yes to the venerable polling question—Is America on the right track?—began to mount, and with them the electoral fortunes of Bill Clinton.

Having used polls to climb back from public disaster, it was only natural that Clinton, when struck with a personal scandal, should turn to polls for salvation again. People would never impeach/try/censure/convict a president with good poll numbers, he and his aides told each other. But there were indications that few of his backers were ready to man the barricades. Since January 1995, polls had consistently suggested that people did not think the words *honest* and *trustworthy* applied to Bill Clinton. He was considered more likely to lie under oath than Bob Dole, more likely to cheat at cards than Al Gore. By large majorities, he was considered less moral than his predecessors George Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Jimmy Carter. Unsurprisingly, most Americans were quick to accept the idea he had lied under oath.

So the White House changed the subject, as best it could, to "job approval"—a category of judgment about which the public might more readily be favorable to Bill Clinton. Starting with the president's first post-Lewinsky State of the Union speech and continuing like a drumbeat for the past year, the president, the first lady, the vice president, and top presidential aides have ceaselessly invoked not the high office to which Bill Clinton was elected, or the trust which was bestowed on him, but rather his desire to "do the job" the American people want him to do. This trope—the idea that we retain a president to "do a job"—has been so robotically deployed by the Clinton entourage that it has been more mocked than understood. Never before has a president deliberately sought to describe his responsibilities in the vocabulary we use to talk about finding a plumber to unclog a drain. But by this

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denatured standard—can the man keep the national drains unplugged?—the public opinion polls would show that Bill Clinton was exceedingly capable. And that would prove sufficient to keep the president from being fired from his job, to use the new Clintonian idiom.

But that's all the polls showed. The problem was vividly captured just days before the impeachment vote, when the *Washington Post* visited the Connecticut district of Nancy Johnson, a Republican moderate. One Clinton backer there said she thought it was "ludicrous" that the president should leave office. But she added, "if Clinton can make the issue go away by resigning, he should resign." Another staunch Clinton backer praised the president for bringing flush times to his state and his city. "I say the prez is doing a good job. Leave him alone." But when asked what he personally was prepared to do, he calmly said, "Nothing. . . . I guess I just don't care that much."

Such is the support on which Clinton depended. His enemies got no traction in the polls or in the congressional elections. But neither could Clinton whip up outrage against them. Rallies held in the biggest cities drew only a few of the usual lunatic suspects. Marches planned for the Washington area were called off, due to profound lack of interest. No one was eager to march in either direction due to a two-faced dilemma. Most of the people disgusted by Clinton did not think removal an appropriate punishment, and most of the people opposed to impeachment did not really think it was unfair. A *Washington Post* poll the day after impeachment, found that while 67 percent approved of Clinton's performance in office, 71 percent thought he had low moral standards, and only 25 percent described themselves as "angry" at the House's vote to impeach him. Typically, a survey by independent pollster Scott Rasmussen found that while only 37 percent of his respondents actually wanted the Senate to toss out the president, 61 percent felt that Clinton would "deserve" this fate.

Perhaps a new set of words should be coined to describe the condition of the Clinton presidency, as the ones that we have now do not fit. We appear now to have a situation in which this presidency is exceedingly popular, or approved of, while the president himself is not. How else does one explain the great discrepancy between Clinton's numbers and the visible effects they seem to have?

For all of Clinton's high job ratings, none of the usual effects of popularity appear. His political presence appears to be weightless. He does not have, and has never had, coattails. In 1992 and 1996, he brought no one in with him. In 1994, Democrats suffered one of their worst setbacks ever because of him. In 1997, before the Lewinsky scandal, the candidates he stumped for lost big. Clinton's friends brag that his ratings are higher than those of Reagan and Eisenhower, the only other presidents of the last half of the century to serve two full terms, at comparable times in their tenure. But he has been less successful than either in getting his programs through a Congress of the opposing party, a sure sign of diminished political power.

Congressmen of both parties have stood in awe of Clinton's politics of personal survival, but they have never feared him. He has never been able to carry a cause on his say-so, impose his will on the public agenda, or turn public opinion around. The reason is, as always, his curious relationship with the polls. Why

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try to move public opinion, when what you really want to do is align yourself with what is popular? When your popularity rests on the tactic of polling to find out what people want, and then giving it to them?

This is a politics of self-indulgence, not of bonding or loyalty, on the part of both the president and his admirers. And it raises the suspicion that his numbers, though quantitatively similar to those of a Reagan or Kennedy at the peak of their powers, are qualitatively different.

Clinton's opponents may have been overawed and intimidated by his job-approval numbers. But he and his supporters have been overimpressed by them as well. The Democratic euphoria after the November election seems to have led the White House (and everyone else) to underestimate the prospects for his impeachment. And to an almost surreal degree, the judgment of the polls seemed to matter more to the White House than the fact of the president's being impeached. According to one report in the *Washington Post*, the day after Bill Clinton became the second president ever to be impeached, his pollster was on the phone to his political people saying things couldn't be better. "As he has throughout the crisis, pollster Mark J. Penn told lawyers and political strategists how the public remained strongly behind Clinton in his impeachment fight."

Clinton, then, was impeached in spite of the polls, which seemed to record high levels of support. But he was also impeached because of them; it was the euphoria of seeming to have popular backing that confirmed the president in his hair-splitting non-answers to the 81 questions that hardened the House Republicans against the president. Without the polls to comfort him in his illusions, he might have been more cautious and politic. Indeed, one presidential adviser, though surely overstating things for comic effect, told *Post* reporter Peter Baker that he blamed the impeachment on "the mesmerizing power of Mark Penn."

It seems more likely that the president is self-mesmerizing. When the White House incantations that the president is doing his job for the American people are echoed back in high job approval ratings, Clinton is no doubt tempted to mistake this for public affection. And he forgets to apply his own hair-splitting skills. What is the meaning of "job" when the public says it approves of Clinton's skill at doing it? Foreign disturbances seem distant and minor. The economy, through whoever's doing, is humming and purring. A new breed of mayors and governors is restoring order to our states and big cities. Leading indicators of social dysfunction—crime, welfare, abortion, illegitimacy—are down. The country, it seems, is doing so well that it might seem his "job" approval ratings should be close to 100 percent, if by "job" we mean only these other things. But is the president in a position to ask for help and support from the people and receive it? Asked and answered, as the lawyers say. Do we respect him? Asked and answered.

Bill Clinton has managed to demonstrate that if a president works hard at boosting his job approval ratings to the exclusion of all else, the resulting high ratings are not inconsistent with public feelings of indifference and even disgust. In the week before he was impeached, as Clinton's job approval scores shot up past 70, the percentage of those who thought he should resign if impeached at one point reached 58 percent. Likewise, favorable reactions to the State of the Union seemed to carry all the authority of a theatrical notice. "I think he was a prince," said a man in one focus group. "I was overwhelmed." But this same man, in the same session, also uttered this judgment: "When I look at Clinton, I don't see a president. I see a manipulator, a conniver, a liar."

Compartmentalization, anyone? In the people who responded to his pollsters' questions, Clinton finally met people who could compartmentalize as well as he ever could, and perhaps could split hairs even more precisely. In the end, few of the people who so manifestly "approved" of the job he did, would lift a finger to help him. They, too, knew how to put things in boxes. And did.

The Clintonites also seem to have attributed an intensity to the president's numbers that doesn't exist. "Seventy percent of the American people strongly support President Clinton," his supporters like to intone on the talk shows. Actually, 30 percent of Americans strongly support President Clinton, which corresponds to the base of his party. Another 30 percent strongly oppose him, which corresponds to the base of the Republican party, and want to see him convicted and possibly hanged. The 40 percent in the middle don't want to see either side win: They oppose a move to evict the president forcibly, but would hate to see him dance a victory jig, and would not be disturbed if he left.

Clinton's friends can still whip up mob scenes like the one when he visited Buffalo after the State of the Union. This no doubt makes him feel good, and may even impress gullible journalists. The interesting question is whether Clinton mistakes it for public support. Has he fallen prey to what intelligence adepts call "blowback," which is what happens when you come to believe your own propaganda, and the stories you put out to dazzle the enemy mislead your own side? It will no doubt be an incredible temptation to Clinton to

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overinterpret his survival in office as a form of public acclaim. And it will be an ironic turn if Clinton allows himself to be tricked by polls that are technically accurate, if misleading.

No pollster has mesmerizing power except over a gullible client. Bill Clinton, in his utter fixation with public approval, and in his need to find himself in other people's eyes, put polls above all else: above power, respect, and authority. He put the appearance of action above actual movement, acquiescence above genuine leadership, and the illusion of backing above affection itself. One can imagine him making a Faustian bargain, trading his soul for the thing he most covets—stratospheric ratings in the polls.

And his wish has been granted. His job approval is still up there, almost above mortal levels. Yes, he was impeached. His power is gone, his name is a joke, his legacy stained. But look at those ratings! Why, he may be the most popular man ever to disgust the American people. Like Macbeth, Clinton has put his faith in certainties that may turn out not so certain. Birnam wood has come to Dunsinane, and the polls are still strong. But with two years to go, the curtain hasn't fallen yet. ♦

Doesn't Smell Like Teen Spirit

By Jonathan V. Last

Orange County, Calif.

Sally, blonde, 15, and totally cool, minds her own business as she skates around the various ramps, cliffs, and cement obstacles that constitute the Vans Skate Park. Her gesticulating father, complete with backpack and video camera, bellows from the balcony of the parents' gallery, trying to get her attention. He finally catches her eye and—just as all the angst and embarrassment an A-list teenager feels towards her parents should come bubbling to the surface—she smiles and waves. Beaming, Sally skates over toward the balcony. Over the din of music her father shouts instructions about when to meet for dinner. And then, as they say good-bye, she blows him a kiss. At Vans, which may well be the epicenter of contemporary cool, rebellion is deader than Dillinger.

Vans Skate Park is the cornerstone of America's newest outdoor mega-mall, The Block at Orange, an 811,909 square foot Mecca in suburban Los Angeles. Unlike other malls, most of which are 75 percent retail and 25 percent entertainment, The Block is about 75 percent entertainment and 25 percent retail. Jim Mance, the regional general manager for the Mills Corporation, which owns The Block, bridles at the term "mall." "This is really an entertainment center," he explains.

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While the typical mall brings together stores like Nordstrom, Macy's, Hecht's, and Sears, The Block has Vans, a Ron Jon Surf Shop, a Virgin Megastore, Hilo Hattie ("the Store of Hawaii"), the two arcade/restaurants Dave & Buster's and Sega GameWorks, and a thirty-screen cineplex. Decorated in a style that can only be described as Disney in Vegas, the whole thing seems to be made of neon and glass. Along the open-air promenades stand "totems," some ninety feet high, which feature images of community role models. There is music all around, provided by hidden speakers that are controlled by a high-tech system of sensors that monitors noise levels throughout the mall and adjusts the volume of music accordingly. And like the monumental theme casinos of Las Vegas, every shop is an event unto itself, beginning with Ron Jon, which features a forty-foot high blue and aqua plastic wave as its storefront.

But the really astonishing thing about The Block is the behavior of the teenagers who pulse through it. Kids are smiling and laughing, mothers and daughters walk the promenade hand in hand, and no one looks the least bit alienated. Kids at The Block don't dress up, but they wear what can be described as high casual. The girls walk around in jeans that flare politely at the knee and fitted tops in bright, cheery colors like violet, sky blue, taupe, and red. The boys wear khaki cargo shorts and loose white or slate-blue T-shirts.

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Everyone wears Skechers, the hottest name in footwear.

And there aren't many couples at The Block. Except for the occasional mixed group, boys and girls travel in separate packs, which often include—gulp—parents.

As suburban sprawl became the norm in America, the center of teenage social life moved from Main Street to the mall. Built for adults, these shopping centers were soon overrun by teens. Malls were places where smoking and fighting were the rule and where unsupervised kids ran amok. The quintessential teen movie of the 1980s, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, rightly taught America to expect a large degree of surliness and revolt from kids in malls.

The Block rewrites that lesson almost completely. Kids here don't smoke or curse. Very few have body piercings. Warning signs caution against "unnecessary staring," "the non-commercial use of laserpointers," and "engaging in non-commercial expressive activity without proper written permission." One rule requires skateboarders carry their boards when they are not at Vans. And that is exactly what they do.

The Block was built specifically for *teens and their parents*. This marketing combination would have seemed impossible only a decade ago. But now, it appears, parents have returned to adolescent upbringing in ways that have rendered their children's normally destructive impulses mute. In turn, teenagers' hangouts have undergone a change, as evidenced by The Block, and their pastimes have taken a turn for the better.

Skateboarding, for example, used to be the domain of rebels. It was a non-sport sport—an athletic activity with no organization, and hence no concept of team or competition—that was performed illicitly in parking garages and town squares. Skateboarding's lack of conformity—key to teenagers with visions of Holden Caulfield buzzing in their brains—made it the pastime of outlaws, the bad seeds who went behind school during lunch to sneak cigarettes. Now, Vans has legitimized skateboarding, making it sociable and about as rebellious as soccer.

The Vans complex looks like a personal-injury attorney's version of heaven. It is filled with ramps, ledges, and steep drop offs onto hard, unforgiving cement. There are two large empty in-ground pools and a professional-size half pipe. The skateboarders are not devil-may-care scofflaws, but smiling Stepford-like adolescents, each wearing—as required—a helmet and knee and elbow pads. Parents watch from a gallery that rings the complex, some basking in the ebullience of their progeny, while others sit comfortably on the blue plastic bleachers and leaf through the *Orange County Register*. When one 16-year-old boy accidentally runs down a smaller skateboarder, there is no glaring, no harsh words. He hops

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off his board and runs back to help the other boy up, apologizing profusely. The two of them laugh and then go their separate ways.

When their skate session ends at Vans, lots of boys head directly to Sega GameWorks, a theme arcade that is a joint venture between video-game giant Sega and the movie studio DreamWorks SKG. Unlike the dark, sweaty arcades the Sean Penn character Jeff Spicoli haunts in *Fast Times*, GameWorks is a bright, spacious place with the latest virtual-reality games. It even has a restaurant where adults can wait while their kids go skiing, racing, rafting, or even fishing. The video games at GameWorks run on debit cards that can be bought with adult-sized $20, $30, $40, or $50 credits. The other mega-arcade, Dave & Buster's, is so family friendly that all kids must be accompanied by an adult.

And while the boys are out being boys, the girls behave surprisingly girlishly. The Block offers a number of places for mothers and daughters to bond, including Old Navy, the no-frills alternative to the Gap and Eddie Bauer. At Ultrahouse, the popular home furnishings store for teenagers, pairs of mothers and daughters coo over lava lamps. Ultrahouse is the source of all things translucent and inflatable, including chairs, loveseats, pillows, picture frames, and even Christmas trees. It is the perfect place for Boomer mothers to teach their teenage daughters the nuances of nesting. And, after a healthy bit of shopping, they're off to see a tear jerker such as *Patch Adams* on one of the thirty screens at the AMC multiplex.

When all the consumption becomes too much, parents visit Starbucks while their kids retreat to Jamba Juice, where they eagerly plunk down $3.95 to recharge with drinks like the Kiwi-Berry Burner—a "Power Smoothie" that comes with a "juice boost" in Vita, Protein, Immunity, Fiber, Femme, or Energy flavors. If you've ever watched television or seen the pictures of dejected, slacker teens on the covers of *Newsweek* or *Time*, it's enough to make you wonder who these kids are.

To understand today's teenagers, you first have to understand American demographic history since the Second World War. In 1945 the men who had fought returned home to peace and prosperity and produced the largest number of children ever born in a single generation. The 76.8 million babies born between 1946 and 1964 were famously called the Baby Boomers, a cohort notorious for their selfishness and narcissism. The first generation to champion abortion and divorce, they were plagued first by drug use and then by mercenary careerism. As the Boomers began to settle down, they had children later in life than any other generation, and so between 1965 and 1978, only 52.4 million children were born. This shadow generation, called Generation X, was defined by the anti-child sentiments that racked their parents and created the "latch-key kid." Boomer parents helped produce, among other unsavory things, a generational malaise in the lives of their first born.

But the Boomers weren't bad, just spoiled and slow to learn. By the time the younger ones got around to having children, they started to get parenting right and the result is a second wave—an "Echo Boom"—of children, some 77.6 million of them born after 1979. Suddenly the radicals who marched for unrestricted access to abortion were sheepishly admitting that they wanted it to be only "safe, legal, and rare." The protest junkies who made chemical living mod became terrified that their kids might try marijuana. Working mothers were replaced by soccer moms. And the new economic prosperity allowed the younger Boomers to dote on their kids almost as fully as their parents had on them. As a result, the differences between Generation X and their younger cousins couldn't be more striking.

WHERE GEN X EMBRACED THE NIHILISM OF RAP, THE ECHO BOOM ADORES WHOLESOME COUNTRY SINGERS LIKE FAITH HILL.

Consider the popular culture. Every generation has a crossover genre of music that makes a splash into the mainstream. In the '50s it was rock, in the '60s it was folk, in the '70s it was disco, and in the '80s it was hard-core rap and *Smells Like Teen Spirit*-style grunge. Today's hit crossover genre is country. Where Gen X embraced the nihilism of N.W.A. and Ice-T, the Echo Boom adores the wholesome Shania Twain, the Dixie Chicks, and Garth Brooks. (Faith Hill, the aptly named country singer, played at the opening of The Block.) Where the popular '80s industrial anthem *Head Like a Hole* from Nine Inch Nails cried, "Head like a whole / black as your soul / I'd rather die / than give you control," today's teens adore the bubble-gum pop sounds of Barenaked Ladies and Jewel, who begins her hit song *Hands* with, "If I could tell the

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world just one thing / it would be / we're all ok."

Gen X dressed in ripped jeans and dark, sullen, earthy tones, while the Echo Boom chooses neat styles and bright colors. Even kids' bodies have changed: Whereas Gen X celebrated the thin, frail, torpor of heroin chic, nearly all the kids at The Block still have a healthy smidgen of baby fat.

The statistics bear out the change. The Centers for Disease Control reports that since 1991, the percentage of teens who have never had sex has risen 11 percent.

More than half of all boys and girls in high school now graduate without having sex. In their new book, *The Ambitious Generation*, Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson cite survey data that show, in contrast to teens in the '70s and '80s, almost half of today's teens "feel appreciated for who they are" and think of their parents as "emotionally supportive." Drug use is down, and after a decade of Gen Xers being despondent about their prospects for fulfillment, survey after survey shows teens exuberantly optimistic about their futures.

To hope that these changes in behavior lead to a generational moral reformation is probably unrealistic. A recent issue of *Teen People* featured a special section on religion where the editors presented the views of five teens, a Methodist, a Jew, a Buddhist, a Muslim, and an agnostic, making each seem a pleasant novelty. And so religion is with teenagers, because while teens seem to know that there are things that should be done—abstention from sex, avoidance of drugs—they don't quite know why. They can articulate the reasoning behind right-minded popular morality, like saving the environment or fighting drunk driving, but they don't have a vocabulary for explaining more serious things. For all the attention their parents have lavished on them, today's teenagers were raised in the shadow of moral relativism. Whatever the merits of the Boomers' reformation, they still don't have the gumption to look their children in the eye and declare that they were wrong to live the way they once did—just as they can't bring themselves to condemn President Clinton for sins they too have committed. And so the Echo Boom is growing up without a moral compass: doing the right things, but guided only by the warm reassurances of pop psychology and the innate desire to avoid the mistakes of their elders.

In that sense, it seems futile to hope that the Echo Boom will embark on a quest to make right all of the problems their parents created in the culture. But maybe they don't need to. Size does matter, and maybe morality is as morality does. In the same way that it makes no difference whether Deep Blue, the IBM computer that beat Gary Kasparov in chess, "thinks" its way to victory or simply makes the necessary calculations to get there, maybe it's all right for teens to do the right thing in service to the inarticulate ethos of New Age living.

Boomers devastated American morality not by one great centrally-planned blow, but by a thousand individual cuts, each a service to self-centered hedonism. What made society conform to them, however, was their demographic mass, not their generational character. Maybe the Echo Boom is big enough that the thousands of little things they do right will change society for the better every bit as much as the Boomers changed it for the worse.

But that argument is for another day. Today, we should just be grateful that Sally and her dad get along, which, seen in the dim light of the Gen X world, is no small miracle in itself. ♦

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Apologies to Our Enemies

By Max Schulz

Once again, the Clinton administration is issuing an apology. With encouragement from his controversial civil rights chief Bill Lann Lee, President Clinton is formally apologizing to a group of Japanese civilians arrested in Latin America and interned in the United States in 1942. Like the apology for slavery the president proffered last year in Africa, this one blames past misdeeds on the nation's endemic racism; unlike the apology for slavery, however, the current *mea culpa* stands in flat defiance of the truth.

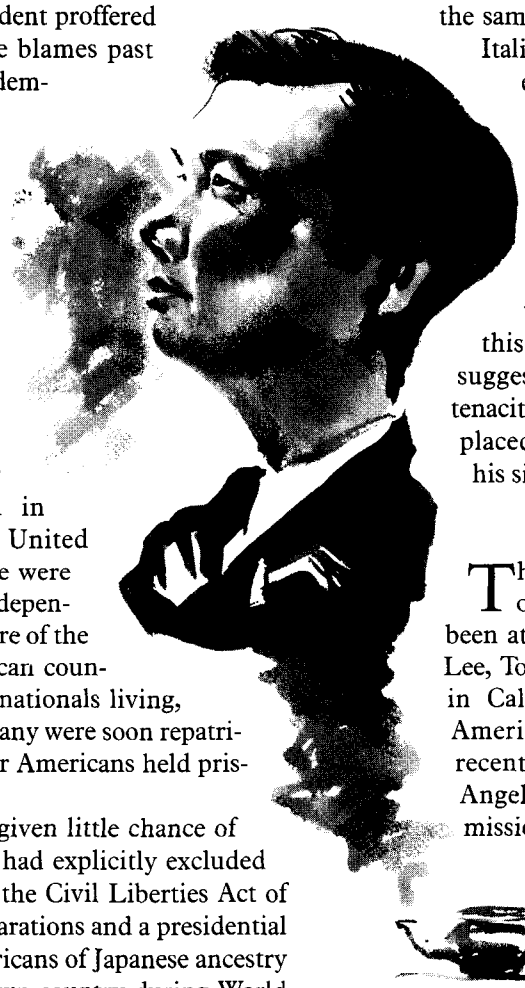
The spur for the new apology was a class-action lawsuit filed against the U.S. government in 1994. The suit claimed reparations on behalf of 2,264 Japanese seized shortly after Pearl Harbor and placed in internment camps in the United States. Some of these people were consular officials and their dependents representing the Empire of the Rising Sun in Latin American countries; others were Japanese nationals living, for the most part, in Peru. Many were soon repatriated to Japan in exchange for Americans held prisoner by the Japanese.

The suit was originally given little chance of success. Congress, after all, had explicitly excluded these foreigners in drafting the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. That law provided reparations and a presidential apology to the 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry unjustly interned in their own country during World War II.

Nevertheless, the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department recently announced that it was reversing course and settling the case, which previously it had worked to have dismissed. Worse, the settlement filed on January 25 provides the plaintiffs not only cash compensation of $5,000 apiece but also a letter from the president deploring a "serious injustice . . . rooted in racial prejudice and wartime hysteria."

In reality, the Japanese from Latin America, far from being singled out for their ethnicity, were in the same position as some 700 Germans and Italians—nationals of the two other powers with which the United States was engaged in worldwide hostilities—who were also rounded up in Latin America and used in prisoner exchanges during the war.

The Justice Department's bizarre about-face in a case it was virtually certain to win testifies to this administration's hypersensitivity to suggestions of racism. And it reflects the tenacity of a civil-rights attorney with well-placed friends—though not the law—on his side.



Bill Lann Lee

Kent Lemon

The prime mover of the suit on behalf of the Latin American Japanese has been attorney Robin Toma. Like Bill Lann Lee, Toma is a veteran of civil-rights battles in California. Long associated with the American Civil Liberties Union, he was recently hired as a consultant to the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission. To advance the cause of his Latin American Japanese clients, he helped form the Campaign for Justice, a public-advocacy organization operating in conjunction with the ACLU.

The Campaign for Justice engineered a successful media campaign on behalf of Toma's case that relied on obfuscation. Specifically, it treated the Japanese from Latin America as if their situation were no different from that of the Japanese-Americans interned during the war. Toma and company argued that, like the

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U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens confined in 1942 by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Japanese from Latin America had seen their civil liberties violated because of the color of their skin. They therefore deserved the same $20,000 award and apology Congress had granted to the Japanese-Americans. Virtually every story and editorial written about the case in the major national media has assumed that the Latin American Japanese naturally deserved the same treatment as the Japanese-Americans.

But the Campaign for Justice is not the only source of information about this obscure historical episode. In drafting its reparations bill, Congress relied heavily on a 1982 report produced by the U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians entitled "Personal Justice Denied." This study contains a section on the Japanese from Latin America. After wrestling with the lack of detailed records, it concludes that, of some 2,400 Japanese internees from Latin America, 1,100 were deported to Japan in July 1942, and another 1,300 left New York for Japan in September 1943, in prisoner exchanges. The majority of these people, the report asserts, were consular officials and their families. During the same period, about 700 Germans and Italians from Latin America were also interned in the United States; 500 of the Germans were repatriated in 1942 in exchange for U.S. prisoners of war.

To members of Congress, it seemed clear enough that these foreigners were in a different boat from the people whose grievances the 1988 reparations were intended to redress—i.e., "U.S. citizens who have been wronged by actions of their own government," as Rep. Norman Mineta, a principal sponsor of the Civil Liberties Act, put it. The law Congress eventually passed also seemed plain to the U.S. Court of Federal Claims where Lee and Toma registered their settlement last month. Although courts seldom discourage litigants from settling a case, the judge in this instance took it upon himself to note that the settlement granting reparations and a presidential apology to foreigners appeared to be "directly contrary to the statute's purpose and moral intent."

There is no doubt, of course, that most of the internees from Latin America suffered real losses. They lost their passports, their livelihoods, their homes. Many were unable to return to Latin America after the war's end, and some were deported to Japan against their will. They were among the many millions of victims of a terrible war. The Campaign for Justice, moreover, disputes the figures on which Congress relied. Even so, Toma's suit under the 1988 law was groundless.

That the Clinton administration should have folded its seemingly ironclad case and reached a groveling settlement smacks of racial spoils. Worse, that our president should distort history and attribute this nation's wartime precautions against an all-out enemy to American "racial prejudice" is truly odious. ♦

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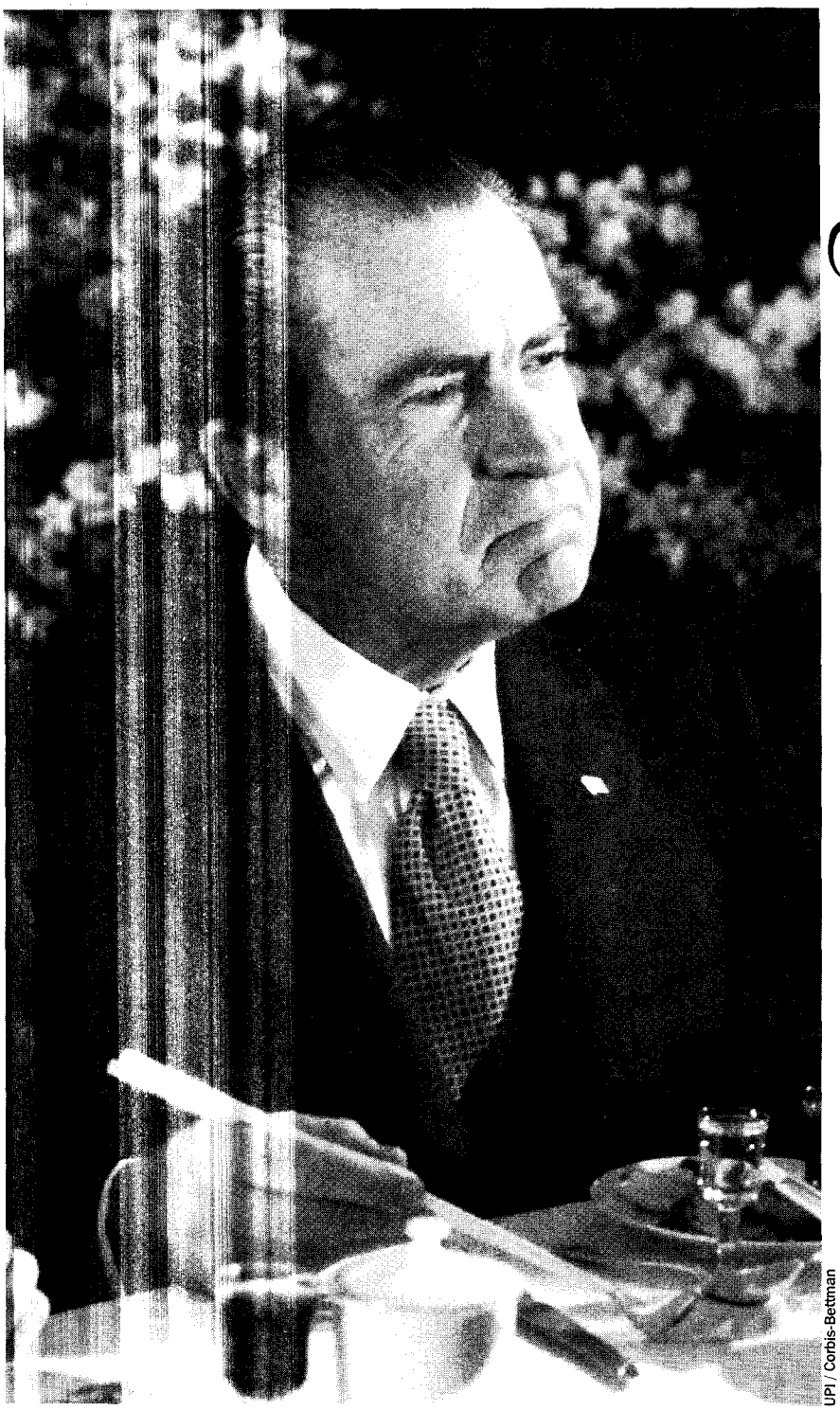
How Not to Deal with China

A History of Sino-American Relations Since 1972

By Robert Kagan



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"Never again," vowed Leonard Woodcock, Jimmy Carter's ambassador to Beijing, in 1977, "shall we embarrass ourselves before a foreign nation the way Henry Kissinger did with the Chinese."

But as James Mann notes in his new *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton*, breaking the patterns set by Kissinger proved difficult. A year after Woodcock's vow, Carter officials, led by national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, were retracing Kissinger's path to Beijing. As Mann points out, later administrations perpetuated not only policies "but also, more surprisingly, much of the style and texture of the Nixon-Kissinger era." The style of U.S. policy, it turns out, has heavily influenced the substance of Sino-American relations—and in unfortunate ways.

The Chinese, widely assumed to be ignorant of American politics and culture, have proved over the years to be skilled manipulators of American vanity and venality. And Americans have proved in turn almost guileless, gratefully acquiescing to Chinese stipulations not only about the subject of negotiations but about their manner, timing, and location as well. In *About Face*, Mann has brilliantly catalogued the ways American policy-makers have made the least of a strong hand in dealing with Beijing. It is a manual on how not to deal with China.

A senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Robert Kagan is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Consider the role "personal diplomacy" has played. The Chinese have always preferred to negotiate in secret with individuals—a preference consistent with a Chinese political culture that invests importance in personal relations rather than institutions. And for Americans—from Nixon's Henry Kissinger to Clinton's Sandy Berger—personal, secret diplomacy has been a lot easier to carry off and much more conducive to fame and fortune.

Many of the agreements hammered out over the years would not be easy to defend in public. Kissinger, for instance, flatly pledged in his first meeting with Chou Enlai that the United States would oppose an independent

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Taiwan—a preemptive concession the full magnitude of which Mann reveals for the first time. For more than two decades, America's position had been that Taiwan's future could be determined only through negotiations between Beijing and Taipei. But as Mann recounts, "Kissinger told Chou to ignore the formal position." Not only were the American people misled, so were the Chinese—who waited in vain for successive presidents to fulfill Kissinger's promise and break with Taiwan.

Personal diplomacy not only avoided public scrutiny, it also appealed to American vanity. Dealing with a single, high-level official, Mann points out, gave the Chinese "an interlocutor who could be courted, flattered and praised for his wisdom, in the fashion of Kissinger. Such an official (Brzezinski, Haig) would in turn often become a forceful advocate in Washington." Americans who assumed the grand role of emissary to Beijing became desperate to achieve breakthroughs, since they stood to win all the praise for success and shoulder all the blame for failure.

The Chinese played deftly on the American visitors' vanity and fear. During the 1978 negotiations over normalizing relations, the Chinese "handled Brzezinski brilliantly," according to Mann. They dragged out the talks, demanding ever more concessions on Taiwan—as though normalization were a favor China was doing the United States. As time went by, Brzezinski became "overly eager, if not desperate." A report later prepared by China expert Richard H. Solomon concluded that Beijing had employed a tactic Solomon called "Show Us That You Care." The tactic worked: Upon Brzezinski's return, even Jimmy Carter joked that he "had been seduced."

Brzezinski was not the only one. Solomon's report, which examined all high-level meetings between 1971 and 1985, found that the Chinese would systematically "exploit or manipulate the differences in Washington, rewarding and flattering China's friends, instilling a sense of obligation, freezing out those U.S. officials who were considered less sympathetic."

As it happens, establishing a reputation as a friend was the least effective way to convince the Chinese to accede to American wishes. As Mann shows, Chinese officials were considerably more demanding of their friends than of those they perceived as hostile.

Personal diplomacy, while ineffective, at least had its humorous moments. In newly declassified notes Nixon made before his first meeting with Mao in 1972, one finds Kissinger's suggestions on how to forge a personal bond between the American president and the author of the Cultural Revolution: "RN and Mao, men of the people. . . . Problems with intellectuals." When President Ford met Mao three years later, the ailing Chinese leader intimated his approaching death by telling Ford, "God has sent me an invitation." As Mann recounts, "Ford may not have understood the Chinese leader; at the end of the session, groping for something to say, he cheerily told Mao: 'I hope you get your invitation soon!'"

JAMES MANN
About Face
A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton
Knopf, 352 pp., $30

It didn't help that Americans repeatedly acquiesced to demands that negotiations be held in Beijing. As Solomon noted, "Negotiating in the Chinese capital gives the Chinese the opportunity to manage the ambience so as to maximize the sense of gratitude, dependence, awe, and helplessness." But presidents from Nixon to Clinton relished the opportunity to be photographed on their China pilgrimages. "The main thing," H.R. Haldeman recorded in his diaries, is President Nixon's position as "a big-league operator."

The insistence on negotiating on Chinese soil was part of a broader effort to convince the United States that China was different from other nations. The advantage was obvious: Special concern for Chinese "sensitivities" and special regard for China's history (especially its nineteenth-century treatment by Western powers) dictated a gentler, more accommodating approach. And the American diplomats who accepted the premise of Chinese uniqueness always gave up more than they had to.

The Chinese also learned, in Mann's words, that "American politicians, after they left office, often sought to make money from their China connections." After Reagan took office in 1981, for example, a parade of former Carter officials—Richard Holbrooke, James Schlesinger, Michael Blumenthal, and Bob Bergland—wended their way to Beijing to do business. Nor were Carter officials the only ones. Kissinger was only the most famous of former Republican officials who gained access for American corporations. For the past twenty years, cashing in on China has been the one area of true bipartisan consensus.

Insofar as Mann's account contains any heroes, they are Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, and his top adviser on China, Paul Wolfowitz. Neither was ever considered a friend by the Chinese—which is probably why they did well. Believing that his predecessors had overvalued China, Shultz worried that while Nixon's opening to China had given China and the United States some leverage over the Soviet Union, it had also given "the Chinese leverage over us." Wolfowitz, according to Mann, "felt that the notion of China's global strategic importance had been largely manufactured by Kissinger to make himself look smart." In Wolfowitz's view, China needed the United States far more than the United States needed China.

Shultz also took a dim view of the clamor for Chinese markets at the expense of American security. Asked once why the Reagan administration wasn't issuing export licenses as fast as Japanese and Western European governments, Shultz responded, "Why don't you move to Japan or Western Europe?"

The Reagan administration didn't take an implacable view of China. It provided the Chinese with military equipment, teamed with them to aid resistance in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and generally tried to improve relations. Nor was it immune to Kissingerian influences. Reagan on one occasion referred to China as a "so-called Com-

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munist country," and his administration contained some fervent appeasers, notably ex-Kissinger aide Alexander Haig. But the Reagan administration, especially after Haig's departure, was also more wary of Chinese ambitions than its predecessors and successors. Shultz, a former labor negotiator, believed that "in international relations, as in labor relations, the road to a bad relationship is to place too much emphasis on the relationship for its own sake."

America had first established relations with China in the Nixon years to offset what appeared to be a shifting of forces in favor of the Soviet Union. Nixon and Kissinger thought the "China card" would deliver a quick fix in Vietnam and help restore a more favorable international equilibrium.

In Reagan's grand strategy, however, the China card was less significant. Reagan wanted to address Soviet power through the buildup of arms and a policy of confrontation that created, as Dean Acheson once put it, "situations of strength" at every point of contact with the Soviet empire. China's assistance might help around the edges, as in Afghanistan, but it would no longer be the center of American foreign policy. In his public statements, Shultz went out of his way to speak only of China's "regional role," and he deliberately refrained from using Kissinger's term "strategic" to describe relations with China. Indeed, even in Asia, Shultz and Wolfowitz put China on the margins of American strategy. As Mann recounts, Shultz and Wolfowitz added in early 1983 "the last, crucial element in their new Asia policy: the notion that Japan, not China, should be the primary focus." Shultz believed Japan's democratic system made it a more compatible strategic partner. Friction and profound disagreements with China were inevitable because of the "differences between our social systems."

The irony is that these Reagan officials founded a closer, more extensive relation with China than America has had before or since—despite their skepticism about China's strategic value, their desire not to offer rewards without reciprocal concessions, and their conviction that deep ideological differences would always limit cooperation. Mann refers to the mid-1980s as the "golden years" in Sino-American relations.

Whether such close relations were actually good for American interests remains open to question. But they are certainly instructive. Most China experts still insist that the only successful policy toward China is a "constructive engagement" that respects Chinese "sensitivities," promotes good behavior through inducements, and sets aside all philosophical differences. President Clinton's policy in the 1990s is the direct descendant of Kissinger's in the 1970s.

The justifications have changed dramatically, of course, from a dubious strategic justification during the Cold War to an equally dubious economic justification today. But the pattern remains the same. It is little wonder China gets the best of us: We have been bluffed, and bluffed well, for years. ♦

THE PROFIT OF HEMLOCK

The Suicide Guru Boasts of the Money He'll Save

By Wesley J. Smith

In *Freedom to Die*, suicide guru Derek Humphry, co-founder of the Hemlock Society, and Mary Clement, a pro-euthanasia attorney, describe the assisted-suicide movement as "a pure flame of revolution," rising from the cultural upheavals of the 1960s. It is an era they proclaim to be of greater historic importance than the American and Russian Revolutions, and in the authors' view, the last great unfinished business of those glorious days is legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia. Indeed, they see the freedom to be killed as "the ultimate civil right."

Freedom to Die is both a partisan history of euthanasia and propaganda for its legalization. To make their case, Humphry and Clement blend half-truths, fabrications, and tactical omissions, with a near-hysterical diatribe against the free-speech rights of Catholics. Taken as a whole, the book epitomizes the intellectual dishonesty of most assisted-suicide advocacy—which is exactly why it is so hard to explain the authors' one major strategic mistake.

Although most of *Freedom to Die* is retreaded material, Humphry and Clement open up a new line of argument by advocating assisted suicide as a way to control medical costs. In doing so, they actually strengthen the *anti*-euthanasia cause. For years, opponents have warned that killing the sick and disabled will prove not to be about compassion or choice, but about money. And in response, euthanasia advocates have called them paranoids and fantasists.

But now Humphry and Clement admit that cost containment is one of their ultimate purposes:

> A rational argument can be made for allowing [assisted suicide] in order to offset the amount society and family spend on the ill, as long as it is the voluntary wish of the mentally competent terminally ill adult. . . . The hastened demise of people with only a short time left would free up resources for others. Hundreds of billions of dollars could benefit those patients who not only *can* be cured but who *want* to live.

Imagine a health-care system that favors death as the best treatment for cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, or spinal injury. Imagine the money to be made if HMOs are spared the expense of caring for such patients. And imagine the potential for coercion when killing leads to the profits the authors envision. As *Freedom to Die* points out with approval, this means a return to the morality of the ancient practices of exposing disabled infants on the hillside and leaving

A frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *Wesley J. Smith is the author of* Forced Exit: The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder.

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the elderly and infirm to die by the trail—or, as Humphry and Clement candidly call it, "the abandonment of the unproductive."

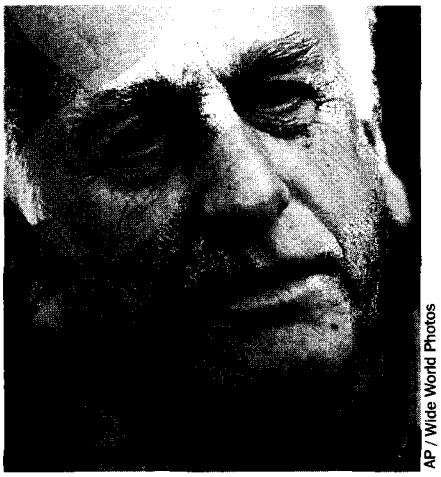
If only the authors had been so candid in the rest of their book. Unfortunately, they often merely chant the shopworn mantra that suicide is to be restricted to "the mentally competent, terminally ill adult." On this point, Humphry's own writings betray them. In the 1996 version of his how-to-commit-suicide guide, *Final Exit*, Humphry wrote, "Severely handicapped people have an inalienable right either to live or choose to die, just the same as anybody else."

Humphry is not the only prominent ideologue who advocates suicide for those not terminally ill. His colleague Faye Girsh, executive director of the Hemlock Society, issued a 1998 press release stating that the Hemlock Society supported legalization of assisted suicide for "every person with an incurable illness and unbearable suffering." That "incurable" is telling. It's meant to make us believe it refers only to terminal illness, but it actually means something else. Osteoarthritis, for example, is incurable. So is diabetes. So is asymptomatic HIV infection. So is shingles.

Most of the nation's assisted-suicide advocates have at one time or another endorsed euthanasia for patients without terminal illness. Timothy Quill, for example, has written that assisted suicide should be available for the disabled, though he later recanted the idea when confronted with it in front of a congressional committee. Last October, the World Federation of Right to Die Societies advocated in its Zurich Declaration legalized suicide for "all competent adults, suffering severe and enduring distress." Death for the distressed? The declaration is a call for death on demand.

The idea that euthanasia will be limited to the mentally competent is equally bogus. In *Final Exit*, Humphry specifically called on states to authorize people to appoint surrogates empowered to order their deaths if they became incompetent. In response to the 1997 conviction of a Louisiana man who murdered his Alzheimer's-diagnosed father, Girsh issued a press release stating, "A judicial determination should be made when it is necessary to hasten the death of an individual, whether it is a demented parent, a suffering, severely disabled spouse, or a child." A red-faced Girsh subsequently issued a "clarification," but she had already demonstrated that all the talk about limiting euthanasia to mentally competent patients suffering terminal diseases is nothing more than talk.

No book of this sort would be complete without discussing Holland, where euthanasia has been allowed since 1973. Quoting the 1991 Remmelink Report, a Dutch government-sponsored study of euthanasia practices, Humphry



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DEREK HUMPHRY AND MARY CLEMENT
Freedom to Die
People, Politics, and the Right-to-Die Movement
St. Martins, 384 pp., $24.95

and Clement write that "only" 2.3 percent of Dutch deaths are caused by euthanasia and 0.4 percent by assisted suicide, totaling approximately 2,700 deaths per year. At best, these statistics are misleading. The Remmelink Report applies the term "euthanasia" only to those deaths in which a doctor lethally injects a patient with a poison. But that isn't the only manner in which Dutch doctors intentionally kill their patients. Far more often, they use intentionally massive overdoses of morphine, not to reduce pain but with the primary purpose of ending life. According to the Remmelink Report, there were 8,100 such killings in 1990.

Humphry and Clement also publish the Remmelink statistic that approximately 1,000 people who had not requested euthanasia were killed in 1990 by Dutch doctors. But, the report itself explains that of the admitted 8,100 intentional morphine overdoses, 4,491 were without request or consent. Thus, out of the approximately 11,400 people killed by Dutch doctors in 1990 (about 8.5 percent of the 130,000 Dutch deaths), more than half (5,981) were *involuntary*. In America, this would amount to about 85,000 involuntary killings per year. This part of the Remmelink Report was considered so significant that the United States Supreme Court cited it in its 1997 refusal to create a constitutional right to assisted suicide.

Freedom to Die acknowledges that Dutch doctors also euthanize depressed people with no organic illness. But far be it from Humphry and Clement to condemn that. They merely ask whether such euthanasia for depression isn't a "step toward a more progressive medical understanding" of human suffering.

They also omit completely the fact that Dutch euthanasia has entered the pediatric wards, where doctors kill babies for "quality-of-life" considerations. According to a July 1997 article in the British medical journal *Lancet*, approximately 8 percent of infant deaths in Holland are at the hands of doctors. Of the neonatologists surveyed, 45 percent "had administered drugs with the explicit intention of ending life," as had 31 percent of Dutch pediatricians. The study also found that most such infant killings are not reported to the authorities, a clear violation of Holland's much-vaunted "protective guidelines."

Along with misrepresenting their intentions and distorting their data, Humphry and Clement exaggerate the influence of the Catholic Church. It's true that the Catholic Church has been an effective opponent, but primarily by joining with disability-rights activists, hospice associations, advocates for the poor, right-to-life groups, and most medical and nursing associations. This coalition is so young that it hadn't fully come together when Oregon voters legalized assisted suicide in 1994. It had, however,

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by last November's election in Michigan, when voters rejected a similar proposal by 71-29 percent.

The authors' focus on the Catholic Church, to the exclusion of all other opponents except the "greedy" American Medical Association, fits the typical strategy of euthanasia advocates, who portray their enemies as religious zealots. The authors claim, for instance, that the Catholic Church acts unconstitutionally merely by *objecting* to legalization. They even attack the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, who in his dying days in 1996 wrote a letter to the Supreme Court opposing assisted suicide, which the authors condemn as "an unprecedented religious foray into politics . . . in violation of the constitutional clauses that prohibit both promoting and establishing one religion over another and favoring religious over nonreligious beliefs." That an ideologue like Humphry could write this is bad enough. But that Clement, *a lawyer*, would allow her name to be associated with such nonsense is remarkable.

Misleading arguments, distorted evidence, and attacks on religion are par for the course in euthanasia propaganda. What makes *Freedom to Die* stand out is its frank discussion of the financial benefits of legalization. Paying heed to the book's unintentional warning about euthanasia as a form of medical-cost containment is a good place to start for anyone interested in the killing culture that will be created if assisted suicide and euthanasia become imbedded in our health-care system and our law. ♦

Big Fish Eat Little Fish

A Novel of the Perilous Academic Seas

By Elizabeth Edwards Spalding

We are perhaps too well informed about the appalling state of America's universities. Over the years, innumerable books have taught us about tenured radicals, illiberal education, multiculturalism run amok, and affirmative action's murder of merit. In their recent *Who Killed Homer?*, Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath argue that the entire discipline of classics has collapsed. In last year's *The Shadow University*, Alan Kors and Harvey Silverglate demonstrate that free expression is in danger on campuses across the nation.

Such books are necessary—but they're not sufficient. The facts are not enough to show America how low its higher education has fallen. We need to personalize the unbelievable stories of scholastic decay. We need the kind of mockery that will make the denizens of the academy hang their heads in shame. We need, in other words, what only art can give us. We need more books like Blaire French's *The Ticking Tenure Clock*, a novel about what false professionalization, the tenure system, and talking-heads television have done to America's college professors.

BLAIRE FRENCH
The Ticking Tenure Clock
An Academic Novel
SUNY Press, 256 pp., $24.50

French knows that world very well indeed. Besides having written a scholarly history of presidential press conferences, she has a graduate degree from the government department at the University of Virginia, and she's married to a prominent member of that department. The reader of her novel can only marvel at the goings-on at her fictional Patrick Henry University in Albemarle, Virginia. "When I see what it takes to get tenure in the world of her novel, I'm just glad I don't teach at Patrick Henry University," observed Paul Cantor, an English professor at the University of Virginia—though his university bears a suspiciously close resemblance to French's Patrick Henry U.

The main character in *The Ticking Tenure Clock* is Lydia Martin. She is a tenure-track professor of government who had thought that she was a sure thing for a permanent job, with a published book, several academic papers, memberships in all the right professional organizations, suitably self-assured relations with the senior faculty, popularity with the untenured junior faculty, and positive teaching evaluations. But as the novel opens, her department has without warning raised the tenure standard to require two books, and poor Lydia is left with a tenure vote less than nine months away and no ideas for that now mandatory second book.

Through Lydia's story, French exposes the disproportionate weight placed on publications in tenure decisions. Major research universities pay lip service to teaching, but in reality they view only research (which often means publishing for its own sake rather than worthwhile scholarship) as essential. Research and publication—not students—are what bring power, fame, and fortune to the academy these days.

If Hegel was ever right, he was right about the hierarchical world of modern universities. At French's Patrick Henry University, there's a master-slave dialectic between the senior and junior faculty. The assistant professors are minnows, while the tenured professors are whales. Minnowy Lydia is determined not to be swallowed before she can become a whale in her own right, and so she abides by what she calls the "Roll-Over Rule": Never disagree with a whale, even if it means abandoning other minnows or sacrificing the littlest minnows of all, the graduate students.

Lydia is not an entirely likable character as the novel opens, nor is she entirely admirable even at the novel's end. She is a post-modern woman in all her inoffensive yet selfish glory. She knows how not to get involved, how not to volunteer unless it furthers her career. French deftly sketches a woman who does not know that she is alienated until

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she finally sees herself through the eyes of others—particularly the young man whose love interest she wants to attract and keep. Lydia has imbibed the lesson that giving inhibits individual fulfillment. So her family, which wants to see her at holiday time, becomes merely an impediment, as does her friendly but professionally useless neighbor.

After undergoing a test of character in her department that becomes intertwined with a private disappointment, Lydia sees her shallowness and confesses to it in her second book. The ending comes a little abruptly in *The Ticking Tenure Clock*, but French manages to show how Lydia not only joins the academic system but also learns, at least a little, where and how to oppose it. The heroine may become a whale in the end, but there's a part of her that remains a minnow—and that's the part which has grown something like a conscience.

What French has done for tenure, she should do next for the interview process and hiring practices at universities in an era of declining standards, budget cutbacks, and a glut of candidates for positions. It's only with novels like Blaire French's—only with the kind of thing that novels can do—that we can perhaps shame the academy into reform. ♦

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

Why Moscow's Financial Reformers Failed

By Thomas Graham

The transformation of the Russian economy was supposed to have been one of the great success stories of the 1990s. Instead, there is pervasive doubt about Russia's future.

It's hard to remember that just eighteen months ago things looked quite different. Then, two "radical reformers" and darlings of the West, First Deputy Prime Ministers Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov, were spearheading the reform effort under the stolid leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Inflation had been tamed; the ruble was stable. The Russian stock market was the best performing emerging market in the world. The economy was experiencing its first growth since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the government was predicting more rapid growth in 1998. In August 1997, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott declared that Russia was at "the end of the beginning" of its journey toward becoming a "normal, modern state. . . . It may be on the brink of a breakthrough." And sure enough it was—just not the kind Talbott had in mind.

ROSE BRADY
Kapitalizm
Russia's Struggle to Free Its Economy
Yale University Press, 320 pp., $30

Rose Brady must feel as bad as Talbott does today. *Kapitalizm*, her new account of the effort to transform Russia into a liberal market economy, takes the story up through the end of 1997. Though she mentions the gathering East-Asian financial crisis, Brady ends on a positive note: Russia had chosen capitalism over communism by reelecting Yeltsin president in 1996, and Chubais and Nemtsov were making a determined push toward liberal capitalism, as opposed to the crony variant. But the financial crisis of August 1998 profoundly shook that optimism. In a short postscript that the crisis made obligatory, Brady concludes on the more tentative—and trite—note that the future is uncertain.

So what went wrong? Those looking for clues won't find them in *Kapitalizm*. Although Brady writes about the political and social obstacles confronting the reformers and how reality imposed compromises on their plans, her description of six years' reform offers no hint that last August's momentous setback was even possible. That financial collapse demonstrated that the choice Russia faces is much broader than the one Brady posits between liberal and crony capitalism; it includes state capitalism and a barter economy, among other possibilities. In fact, the events of August devastated both Brady's proponents of liberalism, the Chubaises and the Nemtsovs, and her exemplars of cronyism, the so-called oligarchs, a small group of well-connected big businessmen. Brady's inability to explain this suggests she missed something essential about what was taking place in Russia.

This is not surprising, for Brady is not interested in analyzing the reform effort or the opposition to it. Rather, she strings together, with a few transitional paragraphs, interviews she conducted with reformers, businessmen, politicians, Western investors, and average Russians during her stint as Moscow bureau chief for *Business Week* from 1989 to 1993 and on trips back after 1994. She does this because, as she notes, she believes it impossible for a Westerner to be objective about Russia. The interview approach lets the Russians tell their own tales and leaves judgment to the reader. Such an approach can work if the interviews are selected with care, if they elucidate key episodes, and if the interviewer is apt in drawing from her subjects compelling analysis or, at least, a good story.

Unfortunately, Brady fails on all counts. Her interviews are loaded in favor of the liberal reformers, a consequence of both Brady's own sympathies and the reformers' accessibility. (From the earliest days, they believed the West's support was critical to their survival and success, and they rarely missed an opportunity to try to shape Western views of what was happening in Russia.) Brady does interview some new Russians, including several oligarchs. She slights, however, many of the key actors—including the maligned "red directors" who managed much of Russian industry, Communist and nationalist

Thomas Graham is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

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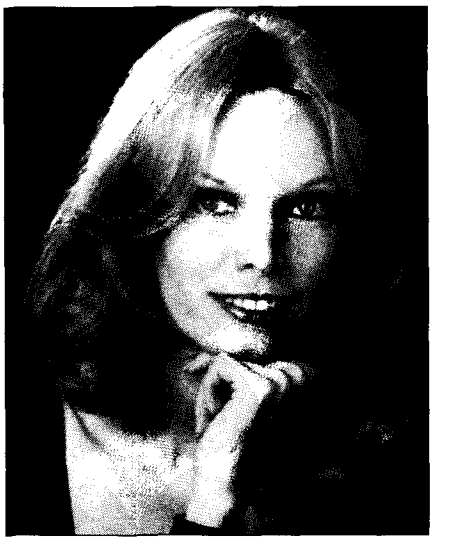

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leaders who derided reform as a criminal rip-off of society, and regional leaders who had a ground-level view of the way reality distorted the reform process. The story from 1992 to 1997 is simply incomplete without them, and the August crisis has increased their importance.

Similarly, Brady skips much too quickly over episodes that would tell volumes about the reformers' policies. She devotes, for example, only a few pages to the notorious "loans-for-shares" scheme of 1995, which was critical to the emergence of the oligarchs and revealed the cozy relation between the liberal reformers in government and a small circle of influential financiers. Under this scheme, the government would borrow money by auctioning off shares in strategic industries as collateral. The winners would then manage those shares in trust with the right to sell them off and retain thirty percent of the profit should the government fail to pay back the loans (a sure bet given the state of Russia's finances). In the event, a handful of banks both conducted and won the auctions and then a year later sold the shares to themselves at cut-rate prices.

Brady deals with this episode through a short interview with Oneximbank chairman Vladimir Potanin, who helped devise the scheme and was one of its principal beneficiaries. After discussing the rationale behind the plot—to break the red directors' hold on key enterprises—Brady finally gets Potanin to concede that the way auctions were managed was "really bad." Brady then plays down this concession by noting that Potanin had a good point about the red directors. But, three years later, the oligarchs' claim to be more efficient managers is open to question: Potanin himself is considering selling back to the state some of the enterprises he gained under loans-for-shares, in part because he can't manage them profitably.

In her failings, Brady is not alone. She doesn't differ from numerous Western observers (including many in the Clinton administration) who wanted to believe liberal economic reform was taking hold in Russia. Like Brady, they were looking for success stories rather than a balanced assessment of economic developments. Like Brady, they played down the darker side of reform, while giving the reformers the benefit of the doubt, particularly with regard to their links to the shadier side of Russian business. And like Brady, they were caught off guard by the financial meltdown of last August and the ensuing political and economic turmoil.

The Russian financial turmoil marks the end of a period of liberal economic reform. The next person writing on Russia's economy won't be caught off guard and may thus be able to deliver a more balanced, penetrating analysis. It certainly won't be an account of the greatest success story of the 1990s. ♦

OUT WITH THE IN-CROWD

Edmund Wilson's Unfinished Novel of New York

By Alan Pell Crawford

The mural in the lobby of the New York hotel where the Algonquin Round Table held forth shows how "self-assured" its members were, the *New Yorker* recently reported. "Sullenly self-regarding" may be more apt. Edmund Wilson, who knew them all, found the so-called Vicious Circle "rather tiresome," with a single exception. The one he liked was Dorothy Parker, who appears as Kay Burke in *The Higher Jazz*, a work of fiction, now published for the first time, that its author started and abandoned almost fifty years ago. For all its flaws, the book is worth a read—although for reasons the author may have never intended.

The Higher Jazz reveals, as few novels about the 1920s do, the snobbery that was as endemic to that gaudy era as booze was. Indeed, drinking served primarily to anesthetize the snobs from the pain of their mutually inflicted wounds. They surely needed some relief.

Despite his approval of Parker and, to a lesser degree, of Robert Benchley (portrayed as "Nick Carter"), Wilson gives both a working over in this *roman à clef* of the Smart Set. "All that crowd," Wilson's almost comically pompous narrator Fritz declares, "are just incredibly provincial. It's amazing when you consider that they're known all over the country as demons of sophistication and that even in New York they're considered devastating wits."

To Wilson, who was, in Isaiah Berlin's words, "the opposite of smart, the opposite of frivolous, the opposite of amusing, the opposite of brilliant," the glib Algonquinites probably did seem silly. Between his birth in 1895 and his death in 1972, Edmund Wilson proved a man of immense literary accomplishment. "The American Plutarch," in Alfred Kazin's words, Wilson was not only the greatest critic of his time but a journalist of distinction, a diarist, playwright, and poet. The mentor of F. Scott Fitzgerald and sparring partner of Vladimir Nabokov, he wrote on a staggering range of subjects, and his literary criticism, rooted in history and biography and free of academic taint, represents an awesome achievement.

Wilson "wanted to know it all," Gore Vidal observed, and so he studied and reported and wrote on the symbolists in *Axel's Castle* (1931), on Soviet communism in *To the Finland Station* (1940), and on the American Civil War in *Patriotic Gore* (1962). Cantankerous and defiant, he faced down the censors of his short story "The Princess with the Golden Hair" and, in trouble for failing to pay his taxes for several years running, denounced the even more ominous agents of the Internal Revenue Service.

Perhaps it is not surprising that a man who could find George Orwell "not free from a certain provincialism" would

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regard the Algonquin wits as lightweights. Worse than that, they seemed to lack sophistication. And to a certain kind of intellectual in Wilson's time (and ours), lack of sophistication is a hanging offense. The irony is that the literati of the 1920s were regarded, and regarded themselves, as the very epitome of sophistication—and none more than Wilson's own insufferably condescending narrators.

In all his novels—*I Thought of Daisy*, *Memoirs of Hecate County*, and now *The Higher Jazz*—Wilson offers a series of urbane protagonists who do not so much describe their friends and lovers as compare them unfavorably with one another. "Beside Liddie," Fritz says of Caroline, whom he nonetheless decides to marry, "she seemed blunt, almost coarse; beside Grace, she seemed sensitive and human."

No one quite measures up to Fritz's standards, and most of life's great moments—meaning the cocktail parties he orchestrates with such care—also disappoint. Fritz manages to lure both Cole Porter ("Eddie Frink") and George Gershwin ("Jehuda Janowitz") to one such soirée, but still "it wasn't the party I'd planned."

Wallowing in disappointment, Fritz manages to seduce his wife on the overcoat of her ex-husband, but even this exercise in one-upmanship doesn't satisfy. Things went reasonably well, he concedes, but all "was not perhaps precisely in harmony with the kind of thing at which I had been aiming."

What Fritz has to be so supercilious about is never clear. A buyer of pharmaceuticals, he hobnobs with writers and artists but only "fooled around at writing plays" and talks of composing music.

Fritz yearns for an authentically American music that draws on the vitality of popular song and the originality of jazz, but he seems capable only of expecting others to produce it. What he feels sure he has is a superior sensibility. He defends Schoenberg, despises Paul Whiteman, and (with Charles Ives as "Ed Rockland") attends Sunday concerts of the League for New Music. Even these he doesn't much enjoy because, dragging Caroline along, he worries the whole time about whether she will embarrass him. "I was at first afraid that Caroline would see how inferior [a given piece of music] was," Fritz says, "then more afraid that she might like it."

UPI / Corbis-Bettman

EDMUND WILSON
The Higher Jazz
University of Iowa Press, 224 pp., $34.95

If Wilson had used a lighter touch, this could have been exquisite satire. Unfortunately, the author himself takes it seriously. Wilson was a great literary critic, but his longer works of fiction are, at best, interesting historical documents. At worst, they are studies in snobbery whose author seems to have no idea of the origins of the cruelty he catalogues.

His characters could have told him, if he'd have listened. Wilson's people are, to a man, rootless intellectuals who have left Gopher Prairie or the stuffy confines of some enclave of the Genteel Tradition for raffish Bleeker Street. In that self-conscious flight from convention, they have cast off the bourgeois values of their hometowns and are quite pleased with themselves for having done so.

Transplanted to hipper environs, however, they remain as judgmental as the boobs, bluenoses, and Babbitts they were so eager to escape. Having thrown aside morality, they replace it with aesthetics, about which they are merciless. In their world, bad taste is the grievous sin—quite literally unforgivable. Because the cultivation they seek is almost always the result of education and exposure, class plays a huge role in its development. And wherever Wilson's characters are from (Fritz is a Pittsburgh "patrician"), they have gone to the best schools and had opportunities those they look down on lack. They are not reluctant to press their advantages. The superciliousness of these preening aesthetes is thus revealed—to the reader, if not to Wilson himself—for the snobbery, pure and simple, that it is.

His Dorothy Parker character Kay "had a distinctly developed social sense," Fritz observes, which may be why he likes her. He is never completely sold on his Robert Benchley character Nick, however. Nick, Fritz says, "is provincial too: Yale [Skull] and Bones provincial—which is the biggest kind of provincial possible—where it's impossible to know you're provincial, so that it's impossible to escape."

Surrounded by such rubes, Fritz decides he must take up "a noble stand of disassociation from the age." By this act alone, Fritz demonstrates just how mired in it he is. This is such amusing material, it's too bad Wilson couldn't have played it for laughs. ♦

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COMMUNIST CHIC

Hoisting a Few to the Ghost of Stalin

By John Wilson

"Mothers bathed their babies in the sinks," Helen Schulman read softly at the battered lectern.

Her rapt audience was frozen in concentration, until a firetruck wailed past the East Village window. Schulman paused. The siren receded. "There, like here, was a place to come in out of the cold, the rain, the heat," she resumed, bringing the audience firmly back. It's reading night at the KKK Bar.

Klan memorabilia crowds the walls: faded photos of lynchings, white hoods carefully preserved behind glass, busts of long-departed wizards. In New York's literary hothouse, this is "the heart of what's going on," said Fran diLustro Gordon, founder of a tonier reading series at the National Arts Club. "The audiences are full of young writers just beginning their own journeys." "It's my favorite place to read," added Rick Moody, author of *The Ice Storm*. It's "casual and more open to experimentation and spontaneous magic."

Okay, okay, it's the KGB Bar, not the KKK, and the walls are crowded instead with *Soviet* memorabilia: photos of Red Square parades, Stalinist woodcuts, hammer-and-sickle banners, busts of Lenin, and balalaikas. And the description of it—minus the KKK—is lifted directly from "A Cold War Relic Is a Literary Hot Spot," a September 25, 1998, article by Glenn Collins in the *New York Times*.

Collins did note that "some of the leftward literary grazers" were initially "dismayed" by the bar's apparent lack of respect in turning Lenin, Stalin, and the Soviet workers' paradise into the decor for a theme bar. He didn't seem to think worthy of mention the dismay that might be felt by those who remember that the toll of communism in the twentieth century approaches 100 million dead.

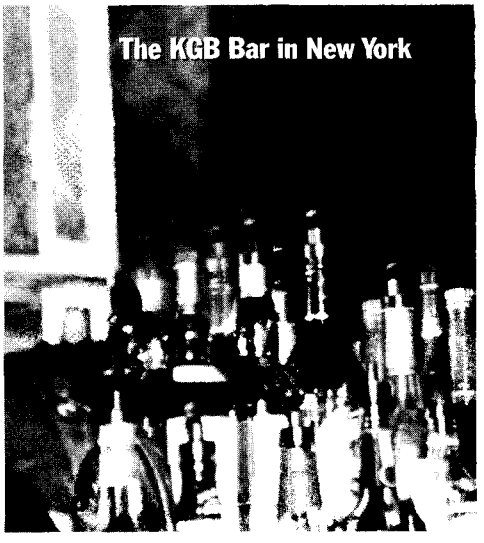
The signs of what the *Times* calls "retro Commie chic" can be found all over, not only among the young but also among their elders. There is, for example, the handsome Autumn catalogue from Verso Press, an imprint of New Left Books. It was Verso that gave us, in the spring of 1998, a 150th anniversary reissue of *The Communist Manifesto*, hopefully subtitled "A Modern Edition," with an introduction by the British leftist historian Eric Hobsbawm asserting the "almost biblical force" and prescience of Marx's text. (The *Times* apparently agrees with Hobsbawm, proclaiming in a June 27, 1998, article "the eerie way" in which the *Manifesto*'s "1848 description of capitalism resembles the restless, anxious, and competitive world of today's global economy.")

The Verso catalogue's front cover features a striking photograph of Bertolt Brecht (the subject of a new book by the unregenerate Stalinist literary critic Fredric Jameson) and the back cover reproduces Brecht's poem "Praise of Communism." One might suppose that Brecht's attachment to Marxist-Leninism would be, at this late date, an embarrassment for his admirers. To think so, however, is to miss the strategy of retro Commie chic. The garden-variety leftist, agonizing in the pages of *Dissent* or the *Nation*, concedes that communism has been weighed on the scales of history and found wanting—while insisting that this doesn't mean leftism is dead.

But the marketers of retro Commie chic know it's precisely the definitiveness of history's judgment that makes communism attractive: attractive not in a way that entails commitment, but as an idea to toy with and enjoy with a certain *frisson*. The Ku Klux Klan, like Nazism, is still beyond the pale, but the Soviets (the *Times* explains with a wink and a nudge) are just dangerous enough to be fun.

There are more ambitious exercises in Commie chic: cases in which what started as a form of intellectual play, perhaps—an entertaining of ideas in order to see how they feel—has turned imperceptibly into dogma.

It is easy to see how this happens. American intellectuals still reserve their highest accolades for the "subversive," and the best way to get noticed is still to take a truism and invert it. So, after the meltdown of the Soviet Union, the hip move is to propose an intellectual history in which the prescient thinkers, the ones on whom we should model ourselves, are Communists. The dull conventional scholar today is engaged in the dreary accounting of communism's rise and fall—tracing, for instance (as Stephane Courtois's *Black Book of Communism*, a bestseller in France, recently did), the capitulation of French intellectuals to Stalinism after World War II. But the wise hipster instead seizes upon a thesis that stands out from the crowd.


The KGB Bar in New York

Something like this lies behind Ann Douglas's "The Failure of the New York Intellectuals," published in last spring's issue of the journal *Raritan*. And Douglas's work forms as well a marvelous example of how what starts as Commie

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chic easily grows into full-fledged intellectual Stalinism.

Douglas, a Columbia University professor best known for *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s*, is a familiar figure to readers of the *New York Times*, where she was featured in an October 17, 1998, piece by Elisabeth Bumiller. Drawing on her work-in-progress on the Cold War, Douglas explained to the *Times* that Kenneth Starr "has picked up where Senator Joseph R. McCarthy left off":

> The criminalization of sexual behavior was born in the 1950s, she said, "when you had senators saying that basically homosexuality was an indicator that someone was a Communist." The Starr investigation reflects nothing less than "the victory of cold war aims revamped for the 21st century." "I feel some sort of horrified sense of being caught in a re-enactment," Ms. Douglas said.

Weekly Standard / Nina Poliseno

Oddly (given Douglas's sensitivity to "witch hunts" and guilt by association), her *Raritan* essay is a model of Stalinist "class analysis," in which the members of the "New York Intellectuals" are lumped together to expose the ineradicable flaws of their class. So too, another ad hoc group—"W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Richard Wright, Aimé Césaire, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and even the far less well-known Americans, the black activist and theorist Jack O'Dell and the theologian A.J. Muste"—are proposed as models of the genuine intellectual life.

This setup is bizarre enough. But it's when Douglas gets down to the details that things turn really strange. She begins with an anecdote. It seems that "at lunch one day in the winter of 1975," Irving Howe gave Douglas his own assessment of why, despite his many books and his active participation in the life of his time, he had failed to achieve his goals: "I didn't know enough." Yes, Douglas says she has come to see, that's exactly right. And not only does it describe Howe's case: It is a damning diagnosis of the failure of the New York intellectuals, kit and caboodle. They just didn't know enough. They were poseurs.

Of course, Douglas doesn't merely assert the failure of Irving Howe and Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz and Co. She gives numerous examples of their obtuseness, their ignorance, the smallness of their intellectual grasp, and above all the ways in which ideological blinders limited and distorted their vision. "Their failure is doubly striking," Douglas observes, "in light of the fact that New York was exploding all around them with new artistic movements and ideas"—and they just didn't get it:

> Not just Abstract Expressionism, but the Actors Studio, the Beats, bop, and modern dance as pioneered by Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and Alvin Ailey, were all based in the city in the 1940s and 1950s, while film noir, a genuinely international phenomenon, set a number of its masterpieces, including *Laura* (1944), *Kiss of Death* (1947), and *Force of Evil* (1948), there.

(One imagines Norman Podhoretz forced to parade through the KGB Bar wearing a placard saying, "I was blind to Abstract Expressionism, Merce Cunningham, and film noir.")

Worse yet were the New York intellectuals' ideological reflexes, about which Douglas is particularly scathing:

> Repeatedly angered by the European Left's refusal to endorse the American version of the Cold War as a battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, the New York intellectuals couldn't see why their European counterparts sometimes found American hegemony as much of a threat to their independence as Soviet Russia's putative ambition of world conquest.

They couldn't see even *that*? Boy were those New York intellectuals dumb. And not just dumb. They were also craven; in fact, mostly dumb *because* they were craven. You see, they read Henry—not C.L.R.—James and tried to ingratiate themselves with the Cold War establishment because they were "eager to varying degrees for institutional backing and power."

And the "internationally minded intellectuals," Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Fanon, and the rest: What of them? They were a diverse bunch linked chiefly by an inclination to communism, which might seem to require a bit of explanation if we are to take them as paragons of knowledge. But no, Douglas doesn't bother with that, nor does she give nearly as many examples of their knowledge as she does of their opponents' ignorance. Douglas is most eloquent on Muste's praise of the "ideal intellectual" who is "open to spontaneous impulse and even anarchic whim, able to 'cut loose' from the conventional, a 'fool and a gambler' dedicated to the 'revolutionary' act of 'telling the truth.'"

Actually, Muste's ideal intellectual sounds just the sort of fellow who'd be in the first batch sent to the gulag. What Douglas—dancing on the highbrow edge of retro Commie chic—can't seem to see is that Stalinism leads inevitably to such absurdities. It is a system of thought based on fundamental untruths, and it can only be pursued by adding untruth to untruth until the result is truly crazy—as crazy, in its own hip way, as New York's young literary lights gathered for the *frisson* of flirting with the murderous darkness at the KGB bar. The hip French philosophers of the 1950s and 1960s charmed their Cambodian students with their playful intellectual games—and those students returned home as the Khmer Rouge. God save us when one of Douglas's young readers decides to do more than hoist a few down at the KGB. ♦

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Parody

"*A Time for Healing*"

It's Back to Business for a Scandal-Weary Nation

Post-Lewinsky, President Shakes Up Cabinet, Pledges "Action"

By PETER BAKER
and HELEN DEWAR
Washington Post Staff Writers

KAANAPALI, HI, Feb. 15—Hailing "an end to the politics of division," President Clinton today ordered a dramatic cabinet shakeup. "The people have spoken," said a grateful president after an anticlimactic close of the Senate proceedings on the Lewinsky matter last week. "It's time to get back to what they sent me here to do."

In a series of moves designed to "make up for lost time," the president announced five new cabinet appointments:

Kitty Knocker will replace Janet Reno as attorney general. Knocker, a pre-law student at Southwestern North Dakota community college, will try to reorient a Justice Department riven by internal divisions over the Lewinsky scandal. "I'm psyched," she told reporters at the Maui Hilton, where she is now huddling with the president. "It'll be cool."

Incoming U.S. Trade Representative Chantal Soubrette impressed the president with her knowledge of the French and Italian handbag industry during an informal White House meeting last year. The meeting was held on the occasion of a slumber party hosted by Clinton's daughter Chelsea, who attends Stanford University with Soubrette.

Republicans lauded the changing of the guard. "If the president wants it, it's fine with us," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. "We're not going to stand in the way of the will of 43.2 percent of women voters in the 35-to-49 age bracket."

But hardline conservatives were said to be unhappy with Pixie Galant, the mysterious Colombian-American entrepreneur who will replace William Cohen as secretary of defense. Galant, traveling in Thailand with her boyfriend Dennis Rodman, could not be reached for comment. But White House Chief of Staff Barbra Streisand dismissed Republican complaints about Galant as "totally despicable, intolerant, reprehensible,

See **NEW BLOOD**, p. 18

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